ISSUE 3

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THE MAGAZINE FOR FILM & VIDEOMAKERS

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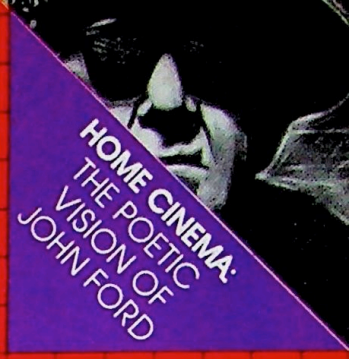
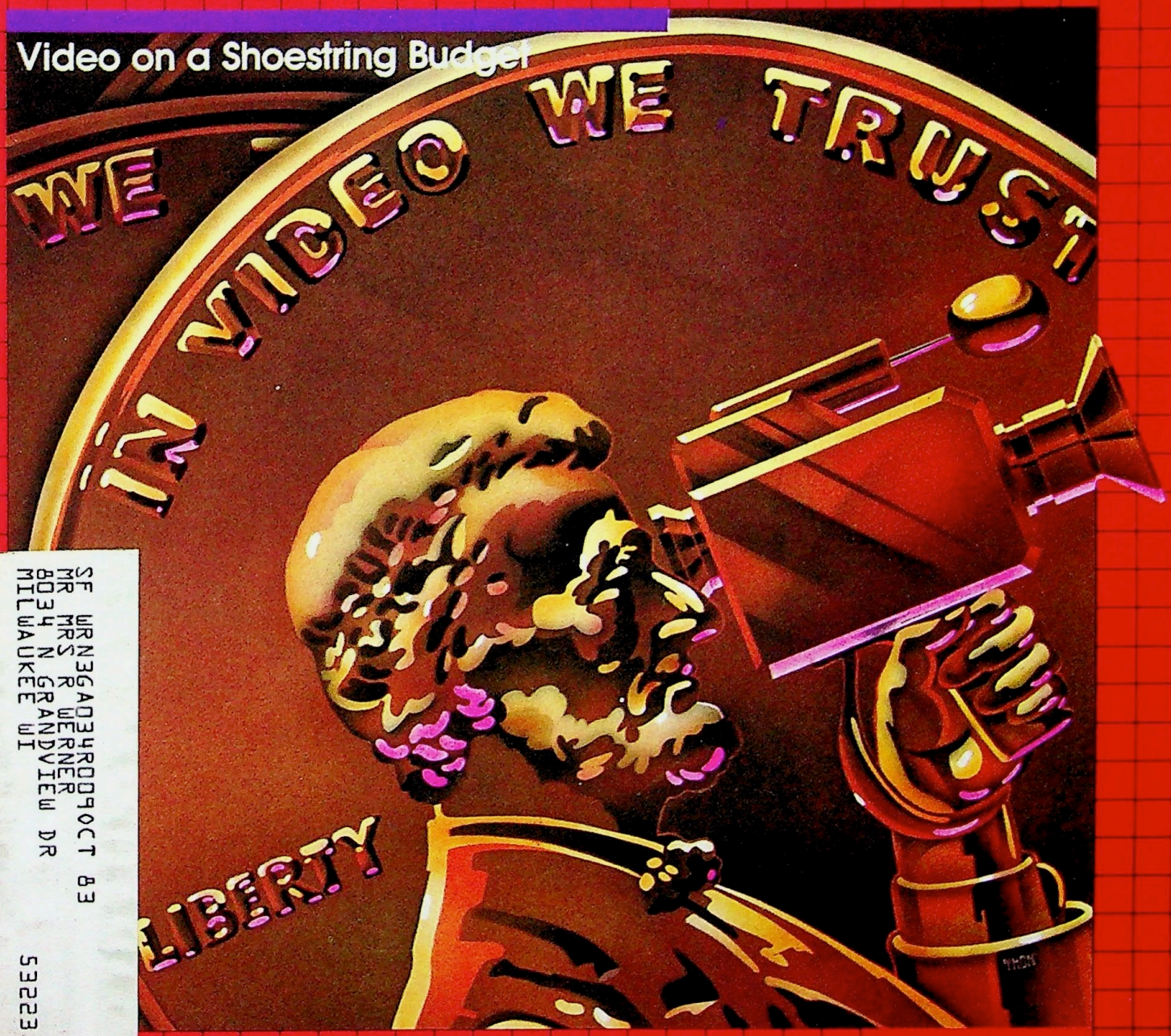


HOME CINEMA: THE POETIC VISION OF JOHN FORD

Video on a Shoestring Budget



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Inside Look at High-Tech Animation
How to Build a Periscope Lens
Star Wars Special Effect Wizard Tells All

Improve your video image

Does what looked good on two-hour look not-so-good on six? Or what looked great on your original videotape end up hard-to-look-at when you dub a copy? Maybe the picture's a little soft; or smeary; lacks contrast; or the color's a little off. You may not even be sure what it is — it's just not up to snuff.

But you live with it. Because six-hour is more economical and more convenient than two-hour. Because a mediocre copy is better than no copy at all.

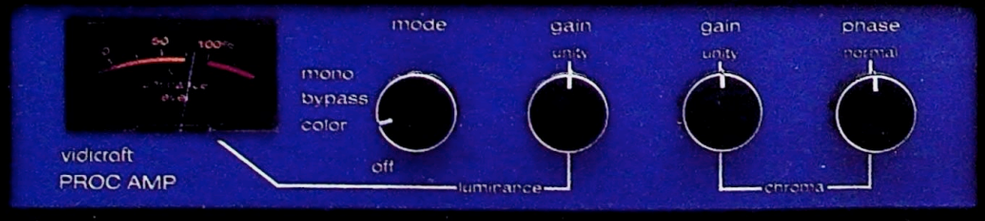
All the same, wouldn't it be nice if you could somehow improve the quality?

At Vidicraft, improving video quality is our business. Our video processing components are to video what graphic equalizers and metal tape are to audio. They help you get the most out of your system.

Take the Detailer II image enhancer, for instance. By amplifying high frequency picture information, the Detailer II can actually increase apparent resolution. Translated, that means improved sharpness and greater picture detail. A crisper, more lifelike image. Better dubs. Better original recordings. Even better playback of programs you already own.

Basic features include individual controls for detail and sharpness, plus Vidicraft's exclusive VNX™ control for enhancement noise reduction. For convenience, we've also included three switchable inputs and a four-output distribution amplifier — for interconnecting multiple VCRs, as well as other video components. And for making multiple copies.

The Proc Amp is another example. It gives you the ability -electronically- to regulate chroma level and phase, and overall luminance level. This means you can correct color saturation and hue for greater color accuracy. And adjust overall video signal level for optimum contrast and brightness. Not simply upon playback - where it may be too late - but in making the recording itself.



That's not to mention some of the small things you can do with our Proc Amp. Like eliminate color all together - to rid a black and white program of color fringing, for example. Or create fade outs and fade ins - to make nice, smooth, professional looking transitions.

Features include center-detent controls, a luminance level meter, and a four-output distribution amplifier.

A bypass feature is also provided - both on the Proc Amp and Detailer II - to give you instant picture-before and picture-after comparisons. So you can accurately judge the results.

Even a small touch like that can be an important consideration in getting the best image.

For a close look at what we mean, visit your Vidicraft dealer. Where you can see our complete line of video components. For the location nearest you, dial toll free: 1-800-547-1491.

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CIRCLE INFOCARD 13

Freefall photographer Tom Sanders – Lake Elsinore, Calif., Parachute Center.

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The Technicolor™ micro-video recorder adds new meaning to the word "portable." It's simply the world's smallest, lightest, simplest. Because of its remarkable compactness, it goes virtually anywhere.

A true portable.

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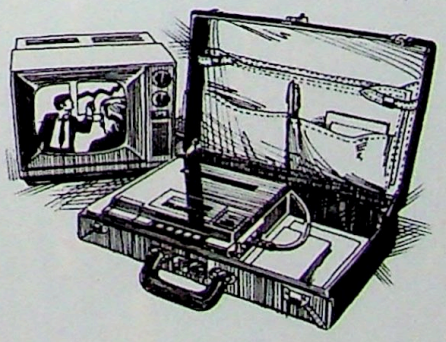
And video remembers vacations, parties and a growing family like no snapshot can. Remember them all with our Technicolor micro-video system.



The system includes 7-pound VCR, lightweight color camera, and matching TV tuner for recording programs off the air.

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CIRCLE INFOCARD 12

Meet the sharper shooters in super 8.

Introducing the finest grain and sharpest detail ever in super 8 Ektachrome 160 movie films.

Coming soon.

There are 3 new and improved Kodak Ektachrome 160 movie films coming to your dealer's this fall. They give the sharpest images and finest grain ever offered by Kodak in super 8 Ektachrome 160 movie films.

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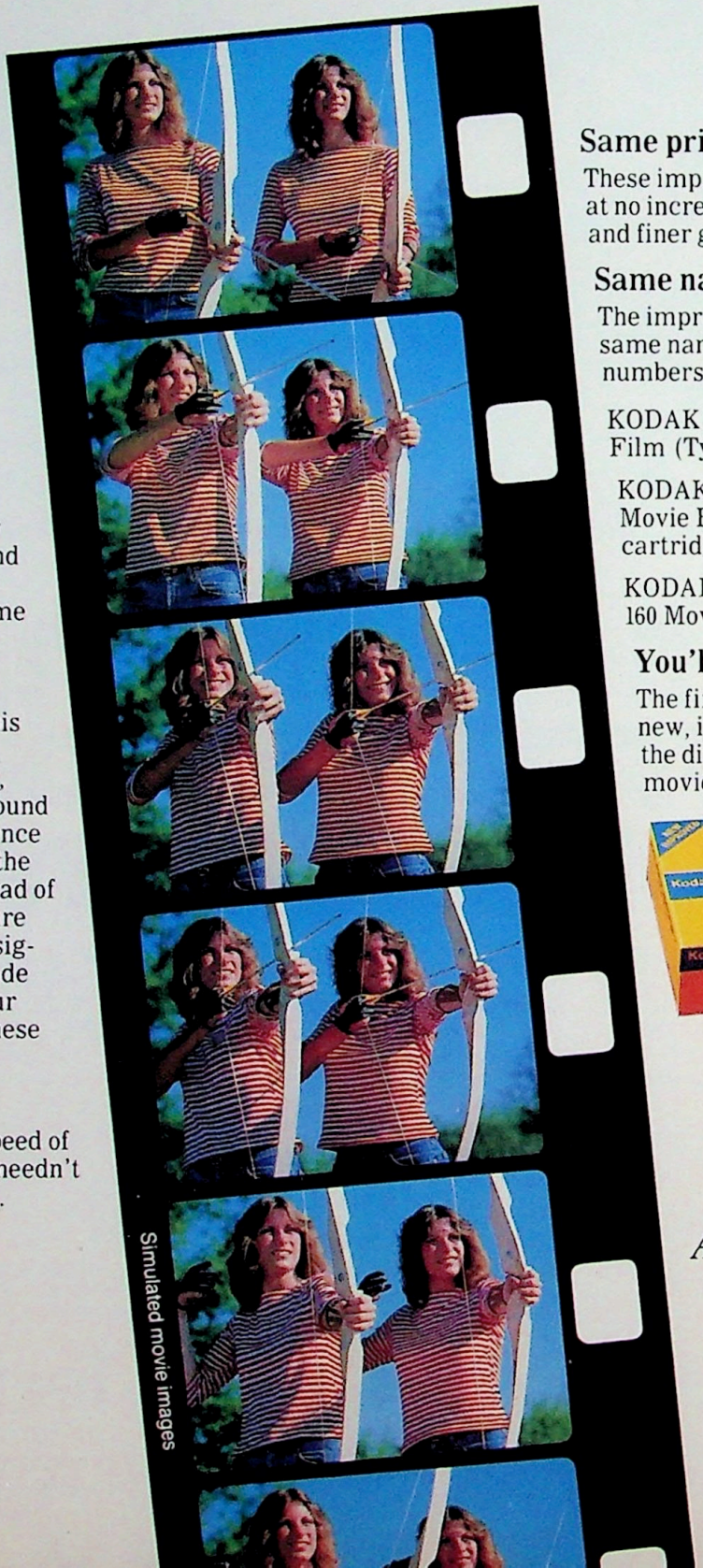
One of the secrets behind this improvement is like most advances: simple in theory, complex in execution. We found that, by inverting the sequence of the color layers, putting the green-sensitive on top instead of the blue-sensitive, the picture quality could be increased significantly. We have now made the necessary changes to our production facilities, and these new films are ready to roll.

Same speed.

There is no change in the speed of these improved films. You needn't adjust your shooting habits.



Simulated movie images

Same prices.

These improved films are available at no increase in price. The sharpness and finer grain are a bonus.

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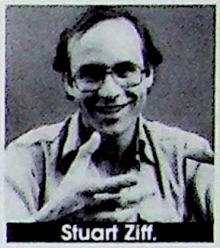

Stuart Ziff.

Like the exploration of space, the science of motion picture special effects has advanced at breakneck speed over the last few decades. Of course, it took NASA a lot longer to land on the moon than it took a pair of pioneer filmmakers. Thanks to invisible wires, trick photography, and trompe-l'oeil paintings, George Mèliés managed *A Trip to the Moon* back in 1903; and Fritz Lang's lunar lensing, *A Woman in the Moon* (1929), appeared only three years after Robert Goddard launched the first liquid rocket.

Today, the situation is much the same: while NASA struggles to get its space shuttle program off the ground, we can view spectacular interplanetary adventures in our local theater. Perhaps this illusionary power of movies is why imaginative and sophisticated technicians wind up working for George Lucas instead of NASA.

In this issue, MOVING IMAGE proudly presents a revealing interview with a leading special effects wizard, Stuart Ziff. Adding to his already impressive track record on *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, Ziff is now helping create the grandiose effects that will have you spellbound when you see *Revenge of the Jedi* later next year. Before shipping off to a top secret location somewhere in England. Ziff took time out to tell us what his work is really like.

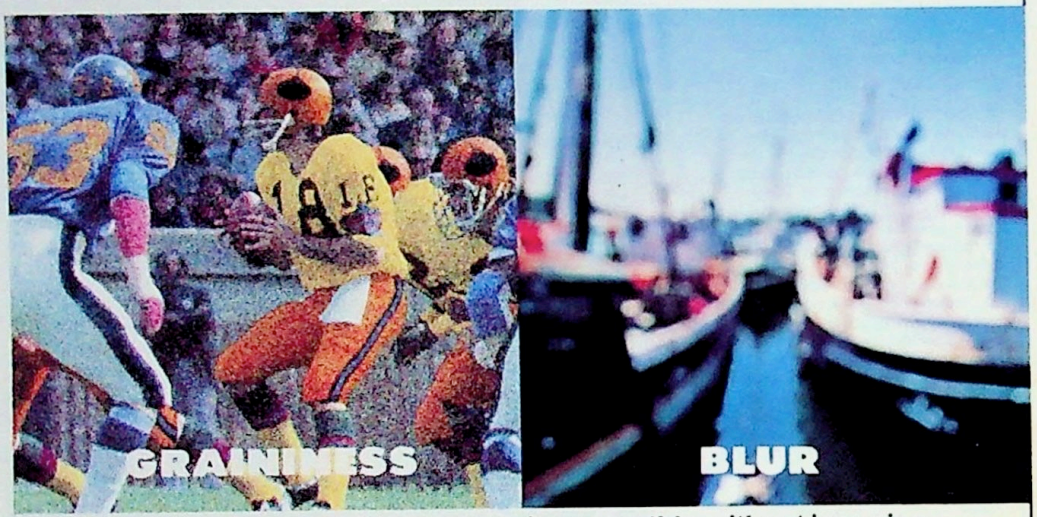
Demystifying the fascinating world of special effects is just one of the many areas we'll be covering in this and future issues. And, if the mail we've received is any indication, it's an area you won't want to miss. We're even sending NASA a complimentary subscription. . .

Richard Jantz
Editor

IF YOU'RE GETTING A DISTORTED VIEW OF VIDEO,

it could be your videotape. The wrong tape can give you more than your share of problems. You don't see them at first. But after a few passes through the deck, images begin to swim into each other. "Snow" creeps into the picture. Colors fade.

What's worse, the slow speeds of super long play act like a magnifying glass on video imperfections, making them pop out even more. That's not what you were looking for when you sank all that money into your video equipment.



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Super Avilyn's big advantage begins with its microscopic particles. They're super refined. Even more refined than professional videotape particles. That gives Super Avilyn outstanding frequency response, so images stay crisp and sharp. The perfect alignment of the particles means a high signal-to-noise ratio. That's what keeps the color rich and natural, and keeps the snow away.

A unique TDK process packs and secures the particles on the tape surface, which is then polished to a mirror finish. Oxide particles don't shed.

Images stay impressively true to the original, without ever showing their age.

Surrounding the tape is TDK's equally impressive super precision mechanism. It keeps the tape running smoothly, without jamming.

Our view of video goes beyond tape. We've been involved with home video since its earliest stages. Today TDK supplies precision video heads and other component parts to major videodeck manufacturers. Super Avilyn is therefore remarkably compatible with most videodecks.

By now it should be clear. When you look at videotape, you should see into the future. TDK Super Avilyn gives you a lot to look forward to.

TDK®
THE VISION OF THE FUTURE

SUPER AVILYN

CIRCLE INFOCARD 11

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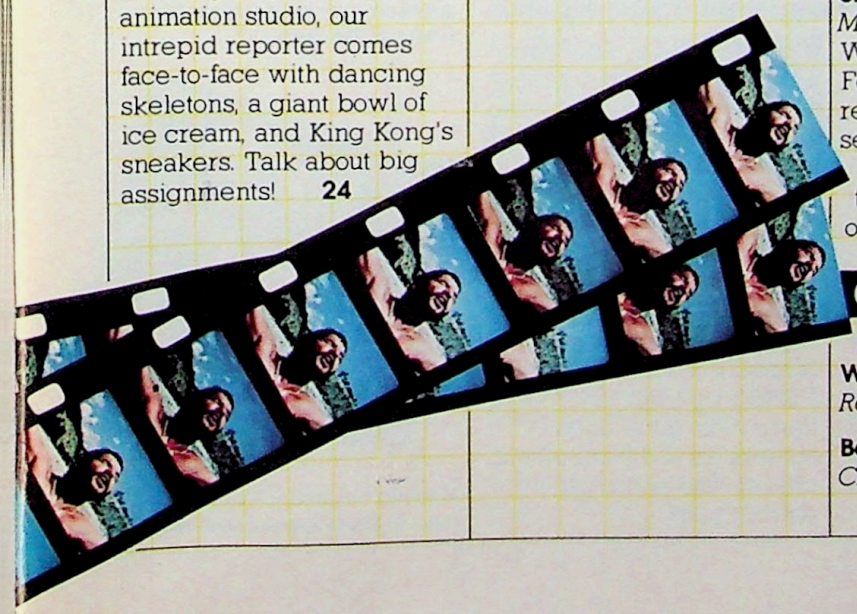

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Quick Takes

Way 'Tis, Jack

Recently the entire telecast of CBS' *Thirty Minutes* was devoted to a video documentary entitled "V.D.: Less an Illness than an Attitude." Think it was moralistic, dull, chock full 'o homilies? Wrong. The entire show, plus a brief segment about the students who created it—yes, *students*—was a production of John West's film and video classes at super-tough Roberto Clemente High School on Chicago's West Side.

"We call Clemente High our 'Midwest production arm,' " states Joel Heller, executive producer of *Thirty Minutes*. The rapport was established two years ago when, during a particularly violent period in Northwest Chicago's student-gang lifecycle, West and his students created a film portraying the futility of gang life. "Too Late for Me" eventually played on CBS, NBC, and PBS and won numerous awards.

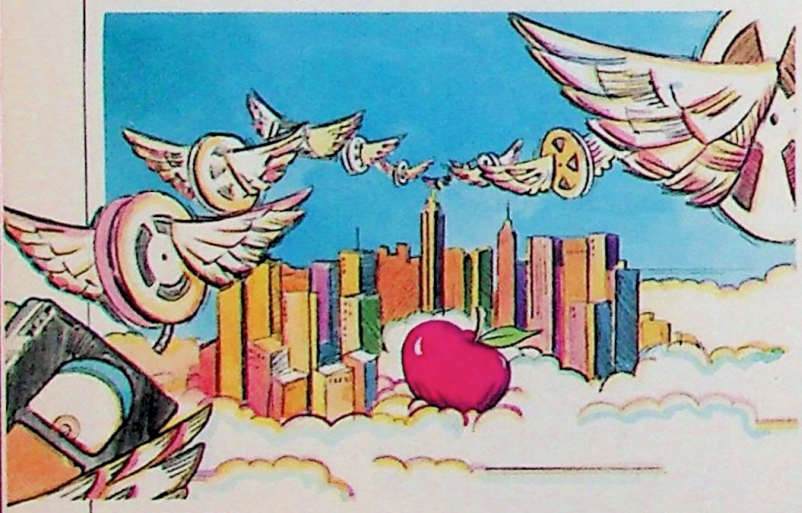
Making the ego-sacrificing observation that the kids were better at communicating among themselves than were professional film crews, Heller advanced $13,000 to West for the intimate and up-front documentary on V.D. The success of the show is a testimony to the raw creative power of today's young people, and to the vision of teachers like John West and media professionals such as Joel Heller.

Film and video teacher John West guides one of his students in filming a TV documentary for CBS.

Three-Tube Price Plunge

If your mouth waters at the sight of professional video equipment and you've got a bankroll of five grand, guess what? Broadcast-quality video—a three-tube color camera with 500 line resolution—can be yours. Until recently, cameras of this caliber cost $15,000 and up. But JVC is charging under $5,000 for their KY-1900U broadcast-quality video camera, clearly indicating that modern manufacturing technology is making rapid strides in placing high-class video within reach of all serious videographers.

Move Over, Mr. Bill . . .



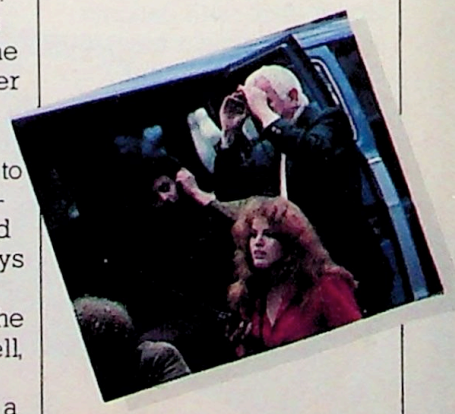
NBC-TV's popular series, *Saturday Night Live*, has a reputation for launching careers as impressive as NASA's record for launching rockets. And now, *SNL* is ready for you! Or, at least, your home movies. . .

To join the ranks of Ackroyd, Belushi, Chase, Murray *et al*, all you have to do is send your Super-8, 16mm, ½-inch, or ¾-inch shorts—up to two minutes in length—to *Saturday Night Live*, Box 912, New York, NY 10101, along with a stamped, self-addressed return mailer. If your short fits the eclectic needs of *SNL*, don't be surprised when Deborah Harry, Steve Martin, or some other guest host announces *your* movie during the show.

Pretty unlikely, you say. Not at all, considering the case of the "Mr. Bill Show." Long before the ludicrous prince of Play-doh became a household name, bumper sticker, and T-shirt decal, Mr. Bill was the star of a Super-8 movie submitted to *SNL* by two zany New Orleans filmmakers. "If I had to do it all over again," says Mr. Bill, "I'd rather be in Minneapolis working as the Pillsbury Dough Boy." Well, that's what fame does to some folks. Why not take a chance and see what it does to you?

Small Gauge Wins Big Kudo

MOVING IMAGE Technical Consultant Dennis Duggan added another award to his filmmaking credentials when his Super-8 feature, *Endangered Species*—a fictional account of the infamous JFK assassination—was recently honored as one of the "Ten Best of the West," sponsored by the Amateur Movie Clubs of the West.



Ruthless intelligence agents at work in *Endangered Species*.

Grass Roots in Orbit

The fantastic concept of a "global village" is suddenly starting to look much less like science fiction and a lot more like our immediate future. One contribution to this state of affairs is a new satellite "uplink" service offered by Times-Mirror Cable Television. For two off-peak hours per week, Los Angeles area access groups can have their own programming beamed up to Satcom I and distributed nationwide free of charge.

According to Maureen Carlisle, Western Division community services coordinator, the cable facility is looking for "responsible community expression on significant issues that affect the lives of community members. We want to be a communications catalyst for access groups around the country." Only noncommercial access groups with cable company affiliations are eligible for the service.

For information on technical requirements and access guidelines, write: Maureen Carlisle, Times-Mirror Western Division, 27811 La Paz Rd., Laguna Nigel, CA 92677.

The Latest Profession

Whether it's a local beauty contest, wedding, high school football game, or even a court deposition, a growing number of consumers are demanding a video record of once-in-a-lifetime events. If you and your camera have ever been hired to videotape such an occasion, chances are you'll be interested in the newly formed American Society of Videographers.

This nonprofit trade association plans to represent the single-camera entrepreneur whose status falls between that of the amateur and the studio professional. One of the Society's founders, Paul Kennamer, explains that the immediate objectives of the group are primarily educational. "Right now we're dealing with an uninformed market. Most of our potential customers are unaware that our services are even available. Our first task is to let them know we're out there."

Other educational benefits will be reaped by the Society's members themselves. The organization is working to standardize rates and business procedures. And last August, two dozen videographers assembled in Huntsville, Alabama, for a series of workshop/seminars. More such events are planned for the near future, with a full-scale convention skedded for next spring. A newsletter should begin circulation early next year. For more information contact Paul D. Kennamer Sr., 7602 Teal Dr., Huntsville, AL 35802.

Super-8 Ripples the Airwaves

What happens when two media collide? Last summer a head-on combination of video and Super-8 yielded a showcase for the small format avant garde entitled *The Super-8 Show: Beyond Home Movies*.

Super-8 filmmaker Manuel de Landa uses his camera to record the rambunctious urban landscape of Manhattan.

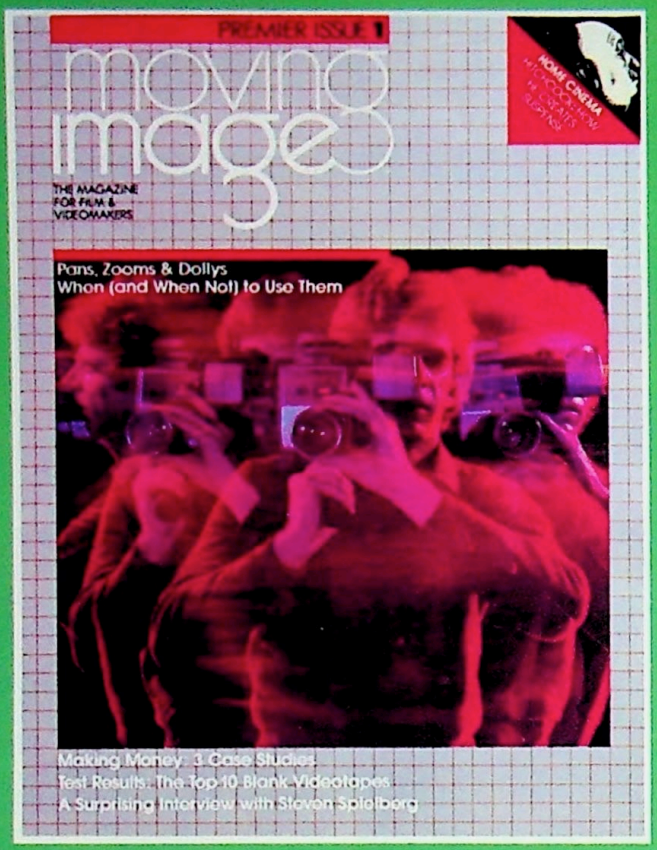
Aired via NYC's groundbreaking public television station WNET, the program featured interviews with Super-8 artists and samples of their work.

The show was produced and directed by Kit Fitzgerald and John Sanborn, two "video provocateurs" who believe that Super-8's position on the front lines of the avant garde should be properly recognized.

One of the program's standouts was Manuel de Landa's *Isms*, a scrappy critique of Madison Avenue effected by the creative defacement of subway cigarette ads. Eric Mitchell, titular head of the punk Super-8 underground, affirmed his commitment to Super-8 as the ultimate democratic medium. Highlighted were scenes from his rambling ventures: *Red Italy* and *Kidnapped*.

Super-8's potential as an artistic medium deserves promotion, and *Beyond Home Movies*' well-balanced sampling was a perfect overture for continuing collaboration with the tube. More, please! □

MOVE THEM, IMPROVE THEM, GIFT THEM, LIFT THEM!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Readers Tips

Sounds from Down Under

When creating an animated film about strange beasts on an imaginary planet, we wanted electrical and mechanical sound effects that were realistic but, at the same time, unearthly. Since we only used common household items, you can easily create the same off-beat effects. For the approach of robots, take a metal meat mallet with a coarse-toothed surface and drag a plastic fork over it in a walking rhythm. The heavy fire of distant weapons can be simulated by slowly rubbing a small wire brush (the kind used for cleaning shoes) back and forth across an old fabric-covered lounge chair—with the mike only an inch away. For a flying monster's grand entrance, try the sound of kitchen tongs snapped rhythmically at different distances from the mike. Finally, for an unusual sound of cutting wood, "saw" an unpeeled banana with a fine-toothed tomato knife, and keep the mike close by.

Heather Giffin
Hackham West
Australia

Hotel Taping Tricks

As a professional video technician with many years experience, I'd like to offer your readers a couple of tips. I do a lot of videotaping for conferences held in hotels, and two of the biggest problems I encounter have to do with the hotel's public address systems and with the decorative wall coverings found in many of the rooms.

When I tape my VCR's mike to the mike already set up on the podium, my mike picks up the hum and buzz from the PA system's amplifier. This is due to the two metal mikes touching each other and the different "grounds" interfering with each other. To prevent this, I keep my mike wrapped up in black plastic tape, which not only keeps it electrically isolated but also stops unwanted light reflection by covering the mike's chrome body.

My problem with shiny wall coverings, such as mirrors or glitter-coated wallpaper, is light reflection into the camera. In order to stop light smears and burns, I borrow a 6- or 8-foot colored tablecloth from the hotel and tape it on the wall behind the podium. It does the job and provides an attractive background. Just watch your framing if you want to take a wide-angle shot.

Kennth J. Coanshock
Newark, NJ

Light Weight

When you're setting up lights in crowded places, always add some extra weight at the base of the light stands to prevent them being knocked over. A cheap, flexible, and easy way of getting that weight is to make sandbags. Take two heavy plastic garbage bags, put one inside the other, then fill the double-thickness bag with about 10 pounds of sand. Fold the top of the bags over to make a pillow shape, so that the sand fills about half of the enclosed space. Tape them shut, then make an outer covering of sturdy cloth material.

If you drape bags over a couple of the stand's legs, you'll greatly reduce the chance of a catastrophe. And, when you're not using the sandbags for this weighty purpose, let your assistant build up her triceps and biceps with them—she'll need help if she's going to be lugging round all that heavy equipment.

David Aitken
Lenzie, Scotland

Space Sparkle

For a rocket lift-off with spectacular pizzazz, try this idea used in my latest film, *The Mission of the Sacred Heart*. Buy some Fourth of July sparklers, like the popular "Miss Liberty" brand. Position your rocket on legs so that it's at least three inches above ground level. Punch holes in the bottom of the rocket, and insert the sparklers with the ends to be lit outside the ship. When framing the scene, make sure to include the whole of the ship, but not much else. Now, have a friend ready to pull the ship upwards with thread, light the sparklers, and blast off. The resulting effect is of hundreds of sparks bursting from the engines of the ship as it slowly rises into the air. As always when working with pyrotechnics, be careful.

Eric Korsh
Melrose Park, PA

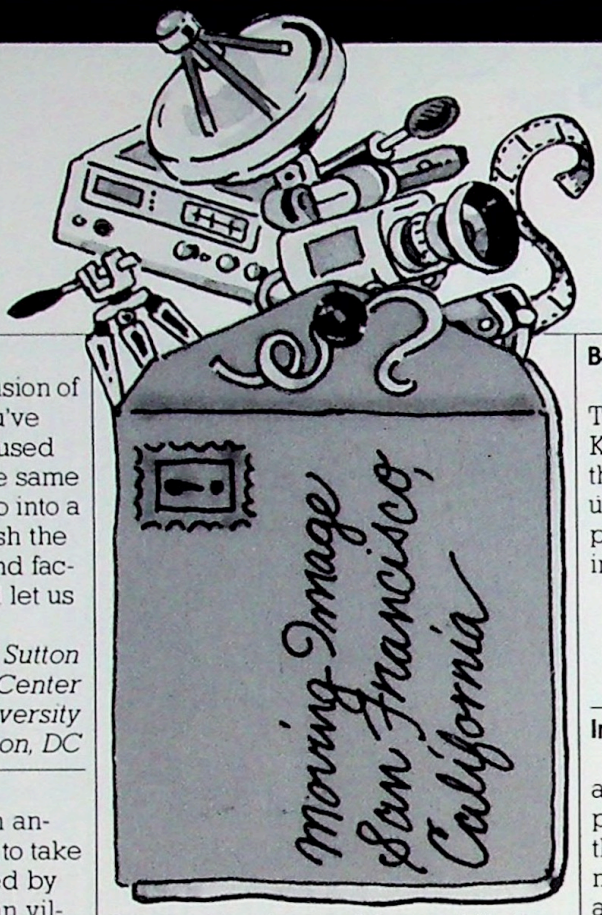
Beating the System

Here's how I add music or narration to a scene on videotape, while retaining the original ambient sound—such as crowds or traffic—in the background. I feed the original sound track via the VCR's audio output to the left channel of a stereo tape recorder, and the music or narration (from a record player, microphone, or another tape deck) to the right channel, monitoring the balance using headphones. You can always record the two tracks separately. When satisfied with the results, I play back the audio tape in mono through the VCR's audio input, while matching the scene on the screen. Start the tape recorder before pressing the VCR audio dub key, to avoid picking up the hiss of the tape recorder in standby mode.

Norman Blumenfeld
Flushing, NY

Receive a free one-year subscription to MOVING IMAGE if we publish your neat trick or ingenious tip! Send your ideas to: Readers Tips, MOVING IMAGE, 609 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105.

Letters



Trendsetter

I'm delighted to see the inclusion of video with the fine tradition you've built up with Super-8. We just fused our curriculum here in much the same way—combining film and video into a "moving image" package. I push the magazine with both students and faculty. Keep it all happening and let us know if we can help.

Rod Sutton
Director, Media Center
American University
Washington, DC

Ethnographic Primer

As someone who majored in anthropology, but was never able to take it up as a career, I was intrigued by the account of filming a Mexican village festival published in your Premier Issue ("Fiesta! A Super-8 to Video Odyssey"). It reminded me once again how alien other cultures can be, and how important it is to approach the inhabitants of another country with respect for their customs. I appreciated Jim Burns' candor and honesty in recording his encounter with the Mixtec Indians, and felt that the whole article contained lots of helpful tips.

Alan Campbell
Chicago, IL

Each to Their Own

I just received my first copy of MOVING IMAGE. You want my verdict? A mistake! The very thing we old Super-8 buffs are fighting against! It's not as if we are old-fashioned, but there are some things you can do with Super-8 that can't be done with video.

Bill Dow
Argyll, Scotland

A Matter of Format

Robert Simmons' article in the Premier Issue, "How to Choose a Portable Videocassette Recorder," included some good guidelines. The big stumbling block is still format. He suggests getting the format your friends have; I have two other criteria for choosing format. Many public libraries are now providing prerecorded programs, and if you think you'll want to take advantage of this service, find out what format your local library has opted for. If you plan on doing production with your ½-inch VCR, check out local production houses or cable TV access facilities, to see what format they're using.

Mark Scott
Fridley, MN

Film Turn-On

I'm impressed! Your "Home Cinema" section is film reviewing the way it's meant to be. Michael Goodwin knows his stuff, and after reading "Hitchcock: How the Master Creates Suspense," I rushed out and bought a couple of the tapes he talked about. I only wish he'd had more space to go into detail on other famous Hitchcock scenes, like the marvelous crane shot in *Notorious* that moves down the staircase smack dab into Ingrid Bergman's hand holding the crucial key to the wine cellar.

I look forward to reading more by Goodwin in future issues of your magazine. As far as I'm concerned, you've made a great start.

Lawrence Broglio
Los Angeles, CA

Best in the West

Your Premier Issue is a winner! The VCR buying guide, the Michael Kahn interview, the way you appeal to the interests of the professional documentary film/videomaker is a real pleasure. Good to see the West Coast in AV publishing.

Byron Morgan
Head, NASA Motion
Picture Production
Washington, DC

Independent Request

I graduated from college in film, and am now trying to start my own professional Super-8 film company. Is there any chance you will provide more information about the whole area of professional Super-8?

Phillip Dean
San Jose, CA

You bet! In this issue, take a look at "Through a Lens Darkly," about a commercial Super-8 production, and Dennis Duggan's Product Probe, *which examines the Beaulieu 6008 Pro camera, which is specifically aimed at the professional Super-8 filmmaker. In future issues, our* Making Money *column will address concerns of both film and videomakers. —Ed.*

Dinosaur Lover Steps Forward

I happen to be a proud owner of the *first* home videotape recorder, Cartrivision—affectionately called the "Edsel of home video" by some of us videophiles. Sure, it's old and funky, but it does have its advantages—like when I recently bought 40 recorded movies for only $40 at a flea market. However, I must admit that I have now purchased a new and vastly improved ½-inch VHS system, since the format is apparently here to stay. While my new VCR is obviously a better system which I'm excited about using, I still look upon my old Cartrivision much the same way I look back at old issues of SUPER-8 FILMAKER and look forward to reading your new

venture, MOVING IMAGE. When I'm old and gray, I'll still pull out my old Cartrivision and issues of SUPER-8 FILMAKER and probably get that nostalgic feeling that "I was there when they landed." Bon Voyage on your new publishing adventure!

Dean Carriveau
Concord, CA

Images of the Rockies

The Rocky Mountain Movie Club is producing a short Super-8 film about Denver, Colorado, showing the points of interest unique to this area. We'd be interested in exchanging this film with any other club that has a similar film of their local area, or one in the works. Of course, we would return the film after showing it.

James L. Howard
90 Zephyr
Lakewood, CO 80226

A Camera Is a Camera ...

I'll admit I was skeptical when I first found out that SUPER-8 FILMAKER was changing over to MOVING IMAGE, especially since my opinion of home video hasn't been very favorable. However, after reading your first issue, I began to reconsider my position. It's clear that MOVING IMAGE is trying to appeal to the common *creative* bond that both film and video makers have, rather than pit one against the other. For this reason, I applaud your efforts!

Jerry Blanchard
Kansas City, MO

Staying Young with Media

I've just become a subscriber to MOVING IMAGE. You might call me a "reel" nut, because I've been fooling around with film for 75 of my 79 years. I had my own silent theaters, operated the 13th Vitaphone (the first talking motion pictures system) installation in the U.S., then it was sound on film, 16mm sound movies, and five small sound theaters. My collection of 16mm color travel films amounts to thousands of feet. Video came on the scene, and I now own six video recorders, black-and-white and color cameras, and 450 videocassettes.

Ray P. Murphy
Newark, OH

We invite readers' comments. Write to: Letters, MOVING IMAGE, 609 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105. Remember to include your name and address. We reserve the right to edit letters for brevity and clarity.

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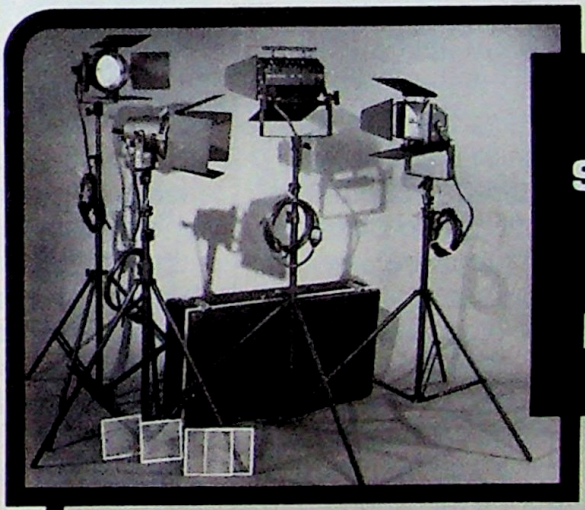
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Lighting The Way To Better Pictures

CIRCLE INFOCARD 27

Hot Shots

Joan Logue

I like staring at people without interruptions, and that's how I began doing my video portraits," says Joan Logue. In her 20-minute long tapes of such artists as Jasper Johns, Willem de Kooning, and Robert Rauschenberg, staring is the name of the game. The artists gaze wordlessly at the fixed camera, which stares back in close-up. The results, ranging from initial embarrassment to vulnerability to repose, are often funny and always revealing.

This genre of video portraiture is Logue's invention. "Ever since I traveled in Europe as a 14-year-old and came back crazy about Rembrandt, I've been fascinated with portraiture."

The New York based artist creates portraits of both the famous and characters from her own neighborhood, like the old bakery ladies in Little Italy. "I'm taking a brand new piece on Lillian Hellman to France for a show at the Centre Pompidou. While I'm in Paris I hope to do a piece on Cartier-Bresson."

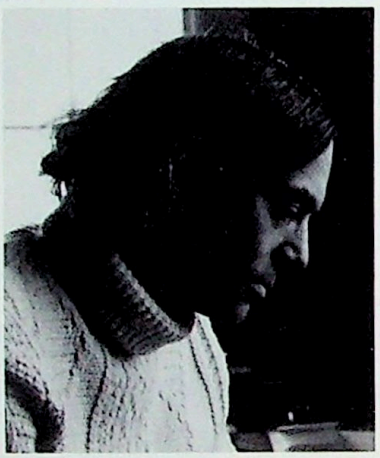
From operating the camera for TVTV's offbeat coverage of the 1972 Miami Democratic Convention, to teaching video in the West African bush country, Logue has been active in every imaginable area of video for the last ten years.

"My current project is a series of rapid-fire 30-second spots on composers and performance artists. They'll be sprinkled between shows on broadcast TV like commercials, except that they give information, not sales pitches."

—Kathleen Hulser

David Ehrlich

Animator David Ehrlich of Vermont is a sculptor, painter, and musician who integrates his artistic vision through the medium of film. As he tells it, animation gives him the freedom to "create and confront a synthetic reality," and what he's done with that freedom has been highly successful. His four-minute film, *Precious Metal*, won major prizes at the Houston International Film Festival and the ASIFA-East Awards.



Ehrlich finances his creativity by working as a teacher, art therapist, and waiter. A grant from the Vermont Council for the Arts allowed him to make *Fantasies: Animation of Vermont Schoolchildren*, an 11-minute film which synthesizes the art of 27 students. "I use Super-8 for all my work with children, because the kids can handle the machinery, it's easier to edit and, of course, it's cheaper," Ehrlich said.

He predicts a boom in the animation market as part of the video revolution. "Most music now recorded on records will be preserved instead on videodisc, and the visual channel will be open to animators experienced in producing abstract images for music."

As an independent, the artist believes that independent filmmakers make a political statement through their workstyle. "They show that it's possible for the individual to have the strength and will and perseverance to do something the world says can only be done by large corporations with lots of money."

—Sarah Seidman

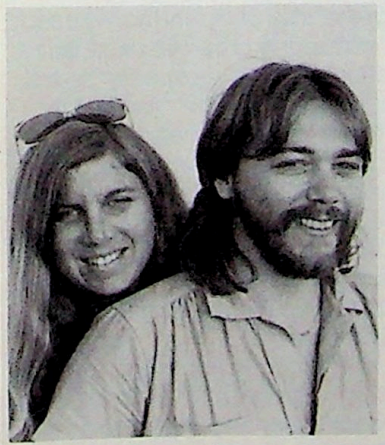
A personal look at some of the people making news in the fast-paced world of video & film.

Julie and Jean-Claude Dercle

When Julie and Jean-Claude Dercle brought their first attempt at a documentary to San Francisco public television station KQED, they were laughed out of the station manager's office. A year later they returned with *Rites of Passage*, a polished, hour-long video documentary that examines the disabled community in Berkeley, California, with remarkable clarity and emotional impact. The local broadcasting rights were quickly bought not only by KQED, but also by a dozen other PBS stations.

The Dercles' production was born of diverse skills, painstaking diligence, and a caring commitment to the disabled. Although Julie Dercle is a student of film and video, she is well on her way to completing a PhD in architecture from the University of California, and she became involved in the politics of the disabled through the study of wheelchair access. Jean-Claude, who studied film in France, has made his living in this country as a cameraperson and editor.

The candor of the physically impaired people in *Rites of Passage* is not just fortuitous; many are close friends of the Dercles, and the absence of narration makes their penetrating self-commentary all the more powerful. The Dercles are currently doing coursework at UCLA's film school, and are anxious to continue producing documentaries with a socially conscious edge. Maintains Julie: "The media has so much power. If you want to do anything, you have to get involved."



—Eric Knorr

Carol Munday Lawrence

Video and film producer Carol Munday Lawrence doesn't want to be known as a chauvinist reacting against Afro-American stereotypes. "Third World people are political, but we're not just fighting back—we're trying to create something new." Her independent production company, Nguzo Saba Films, has just completed a seven-part series, *Were You There*, to be aired this winter over PBS. Each half-hour segment combines documentary footage, personal anecdotes, and dramatizations in a look at an important era or person in black history, such as movie producer/director Oscar Micheaux, black settlers in the frontier west, and Harlem's famed Cotton Club in the '20s.

After an early stint with a Boston TV station, Lawrence moved to San Francisco and started Nguzo Saba. An early prize-winning film series of *Folktales for Children* is now distributed nationally, but keeping her production company going hasn't been easy. Lawrence takes a practical attitude: "Independent production is a matter of bucks. You've got to stay versatile." To help pay the bills, the company takes on commercial jobs, and teaches video at a local high school.

Recently offered a television staff producer job, Lawrence turned it down in favor of her own projects. Proud of Nzugo Saba's reputation and experience, she's currently excited about a Corporation for Public Broadcasting grant she's received to adapt three short stories for film.

—Leslie Clark

Q&A

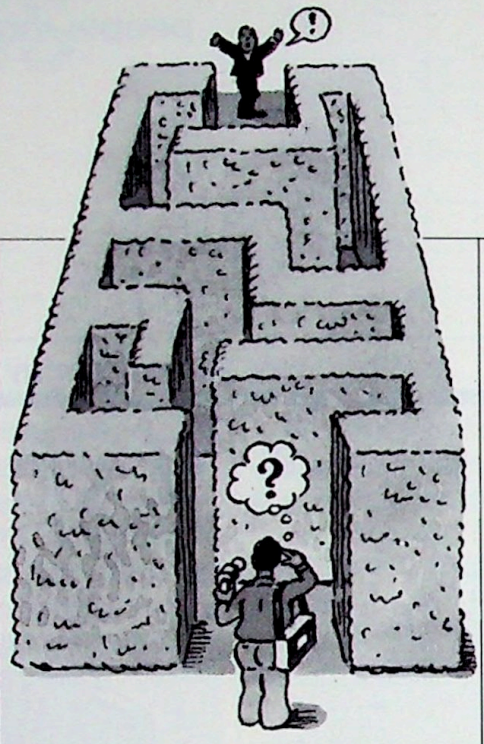
I have a VHS recorder, but my sister has a Beta machine. How can we copy each other's tapes?
Helen Woodcock, Dallas, TX

Copying tapes from either VHS or Beta formats to the competitive format is no problem. Simply run the "Video out" from the playback deck into the "Video in" of the recording deck, and you're all set. Beta and VHS, incompatible as they are, only differ in their threading paths and the way in which the signals are laid on the tape. But video is video is video, whether it be ½-inch VHS or 1-inch type C.

Film I've taken recently appears "fogged." Is the lab to blame, or could this be a camera or cartridge malfunction?
Richard Jarvis, Tenafly, NJ

Assuming you weren't filming London in the winter, the fogging could originate in several ways. A common problem, often warned of in camera manuals, is extraneous light entering through the camera eyepiece. In shooting situations where you're not looking through the viewfinder, stray light can enter the eyepiece and strike the film, causing fogging. Many cameras have an "eyepiece lock" to prevent this by closing off the eyepiece completely.

As it's highly unlikely the cartridge of original film is at fault, there are two other possible causes of fogging: your camera or the lab. To determine which, here's the definitive test. Load your camera, leave the lens cap on, and set the f/stop at the smallest aperture. In a totally dark room, shoot some footage while someone periodically turns a light on and off. Process the film. If there's no fogging, the original problem may have been a one-time lab mistake. If you discover intermittent fogging, the camera is leaking light and should be sent for a service check. Continuous fogging could only have happened in the lab, since there's no other time that light could



have struck all the film. Contact the lab and explain the test you did. They may not be aware of the problem and should welcome the feedback. If not, change labs.

I've owned a color video camera for the past year or so, but recently my local dealer has been trying to sell me a new model that he claims focuses automatically. Is he just handing me a line, or does such a thing really exist? And does it really work?
Fred Christopher, Los Angeles, CA

Believe it or not, not one but *two* manufacturers, Akai and Toshiba, have shown autofocus video cameras at trade shows, and both should now be available from dealers. Each camera uses a similar technique developed by lens manufacturer Canon: two light sensors mounted just above the lens bounce the light through a series of mirrors and a prism to a solid-state CCD (charge coupled device) array. The CCDs measure the light output with extreme accuracy, and send signals to a microprocessor which, in turn, electrically rotates the focus knob on the lens for maximum light output. The system is based on the principle that the light output from a lens is usually greatest when the image is properly focused. The two models we've examined, the Akai VC-X1 and the Toshiba IK-1850AF, do a surprisingly good job, and in several cases reacted faster to rapid focus changes than we could, manually. For effects such as "focus rolls" or artistic "deep-focus" shots, you'll probably want to run the camera manually, but for fast-moving action shooting, the autofocus feature should come in very handy. For more information, write Akai America, P.O. Box 6010, Compton, CA 90224, and Toshiba America, 82 Totowa Rd., Wayne, NJ 07470.

A student nearing college graduation, I'm interested in attending a school to learn film technique. If possible, I want to avoid another costly, time-consuming four years. Can you send me a listing of schools for the motivated student?
Walt Caskill, Jr., Westville, NJ

You could fill a book with listings of schools offering some variety of film course, and in fact somebody has. *The American Film Institute Guide to College Courses in Film and Television*, now in its seventh edition, is published by Peterson's Guides, P.O. Box 2123, Princeton, NJ 08540. This is an excellent source of information about undergrad and graduate programs, and a great way of orienting yourself before starting to type out exhaustive applications. You've probably heard of New York's School of Visual Arts, which has a good reputation for hands-on experience, and the UCLA (University of California, Los Angeles) Film Department, which has produced such impressive graduates as Francis Ford Coppola, but did you know that Montana State University offers a wide range of 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, and video equipment, and the instruction to go with it? Each college has its own style, and we suggest you check out any school you're interested in by talking to other students and getting a feel for the place. The more you talk to people involved in either learn-

ing or teaching the subject, the more you'll be able to pinpoint exactly what you want and how to get it.

I have relatives overseas, and would like to trade tapes back and forth with them. We both own Sony Betamaxes, but I've heard that England has a different power standard from America.
Mike Gordon, Bethesda, MD

Not only does England have a different power standard, they have a different *video* standard and *channel frequency* standards, too. As a result, a VCR purchased in America won't work in England, and *vice versa*. However, there are several multi-standard VCRs, which can playback all three world video standards—NTSC/PAL/SECAM—and record at least two of them. Sony's SL-T7, available for about $1,500 from most industrial and CCTV (closed circuit television) dealers, is an X2 (long play) Beta deck that provides this capability; be forewarned that it can't *record* NTSC, which is the video standard used in the U.S. It will record the other two. By purchasing a SL-T7 and an appropriate three-standard monitor, you can play British PAL-standard recordings, and your relatives can buy the same machine and play back our NTSC tapes.

Although we haven't tried it out yet, we've recently heard of a new world standards modification kit for VCRs. The word is that it will be available in two versions: one for playback of PAL tapes on NTSC equipment; the other for the reverse, NTSC tapes being played back on PAL equipment. For more information about this Image Translator, write to Instant Replay, 2980 McFarlane Rd., Coconut Grove, FL 33133.

Another solution would be to try having your tapes dubbed from PAL to NTSC by firms like Devlin Productions, 10 W. 55th St., New York, NY 10019, or Intercontinental Televideo, 10 W. 66th St., Suite 11F, New York, NY 10023. Unfortunately, this service usually is extremely expensive—about $200 an hour—and none of these firms is legally permitted to transfer copyrighted programs.

If you have a question about film or video, send it to: Q&A, MOVING IMAGE, 609 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105. Responses are prepared with the help of Marc Wielage and Bruce Anderson. We cannot guarantee personal reples to queries not published.

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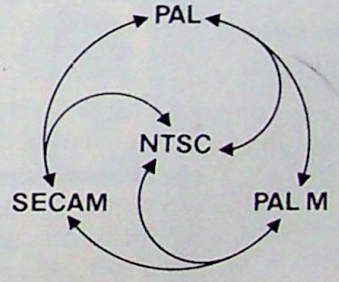

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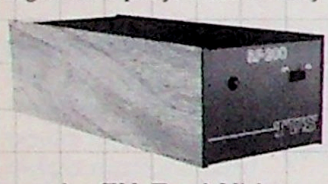
CIRCLE INFOCARD 16

Items of Interest

Signal Soirée

Even though your VCR has its own built-in RF converter, an extra one offers you more flexible use of your video equipment. The *RF-200 RF Modulator* from *Total Video Supply* takes separate audio and video signals from any video component—VCR, camera, enhancer, etc.—and combines them into an RF signal for playback on any

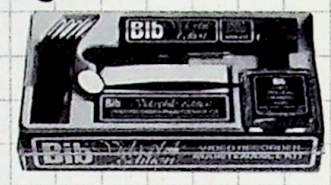


regular TV. Total Video Supply, 9060 Clairemont Mesa Blvd., San Diego, CA 92123. *Suggested retail price:* $69.95. Circle Infocard 1.

Storage Solution

The mass of video and audio components needed for a "complete system" can put a great strain on available tabletop space. No need to eat off the floor—if you've got a *Gusdorf Model 1935 Home Entertainment Cabinet*. It will hold your VCR, TV, a number of audio components, and a videodisc player—plus albums, cassettes, and discs. With a choice of pecan or walnut finishes and bronze-tone glass doors to keep out destructive dust, the Gusdorf is right at home in any living room. Gusdorf, 6900 Manchester Ave., St. Louis, MO 63143. *Suggested retail price:* $380. Circle Infocard 5.

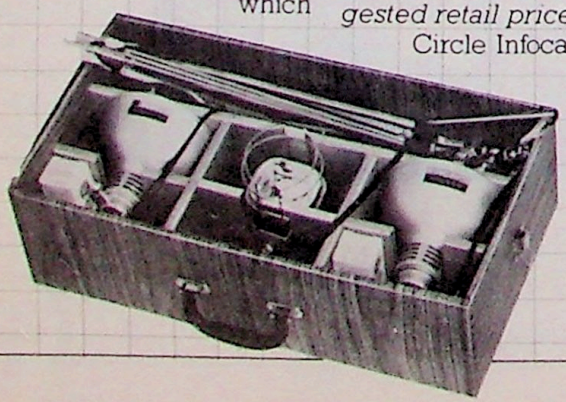
Treat Your Heads Right



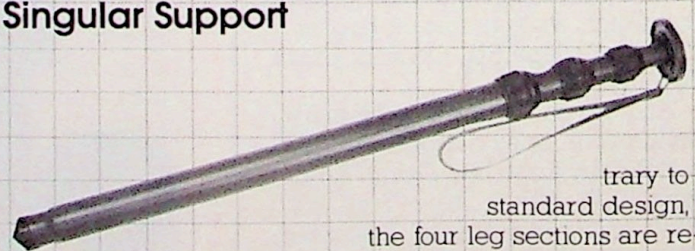
Head off potential VCR trouble by using the *Bib Video Recorder Maintenance Kit*. The convenient package supplies everything you require for routine cleaning of video, audio, erase, and control heads, as well as the head drum and all of the tape guides. The kit includes five special head cleaning tools, head cleaning fluid, a can of compressed air, inspection mirror, anti-static cleaning cloth, a cross-point screwdriver, and a clearly illustrated maintenance manual. Bib, 1750 Jay Ell Dr., Richardson, TX 75081. *Suggested retail price:* $23.95. Circle Infocard 6.

De-light-ful to Look at ...

Make lighting easy on yourself! The *Acme-Lite LP27 Light Kit* includes a 600-watt light for mounting on top of your camera, so front fill lighting is a cinch. Two reflectors and stands—also with 600-watt quartz lamps—are part of the package, which comes in a partitioned carrier with snaplocks and styrene handle. Acme-Lite offers more kits for the home video/filmmaker. For more information write directly to Acme-Lite, 3401 Madison St., Skokie, IL 60076. *Suggested retail price:* $215. Circle Infocard 4.



Singular Support



Following snow geese in the swamps or filming your kids playing soccer in the mud, you might find the *Gitzo Safari Mono Studex* handy. This monopod is designed to help keep your camera steady and secure in the softest, wettest ground imaginable. Contrary to standard design, the four leg sections are reversed, so the thinnest is at the top with a platform and reversible ½-inch or ⅜-inch screw. The bottom extension ends in a hard rubber tip, or metal spike, and the whole monopod is made of metal. Karl Heitz, 979 Third Ave., New York, NY 10022. *Suggested retail price:* $89.95. Circle Infocard 2.

Power Play

Want more shooting time out in the field with your portable VCR?

Gould's Again & Again Power Pack will power most VCRs for up to four hours. The gelled electrolyte lead-acid battery comes complete with a carrying case and charger, and is rated 12 volts, 6 ampere hours for portable TVs and recorders. Gould's line of rechargeable batteries also includes the sizes AA, C, D, and 9V. For more information, write to the company's Portable Battery Div., 1110 Highway 110, Mendoza Heights, MN 55118. *Suggested retail price* for the Power Pack: $59.95. Circle Infocard 3.

Beaulieu

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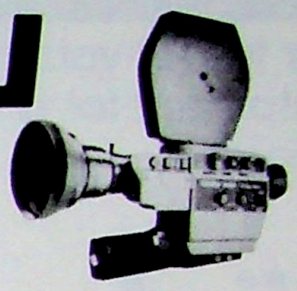

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STEVEN SEID

How to get your hands on great video equipment for a lot less than you might expect.

Video on a Shoestring

Everybody interested in exploring video figures the equipment is going to cost a bundle, what with those sleek electronic cameras and cassette recorders loaded down with microcircuitry. For the most part, they're right: a first-class rig *is* going to cost a bundle. But you don't have to step into your local video supply store and unload a substantial part of the national debt. At least, not right now.

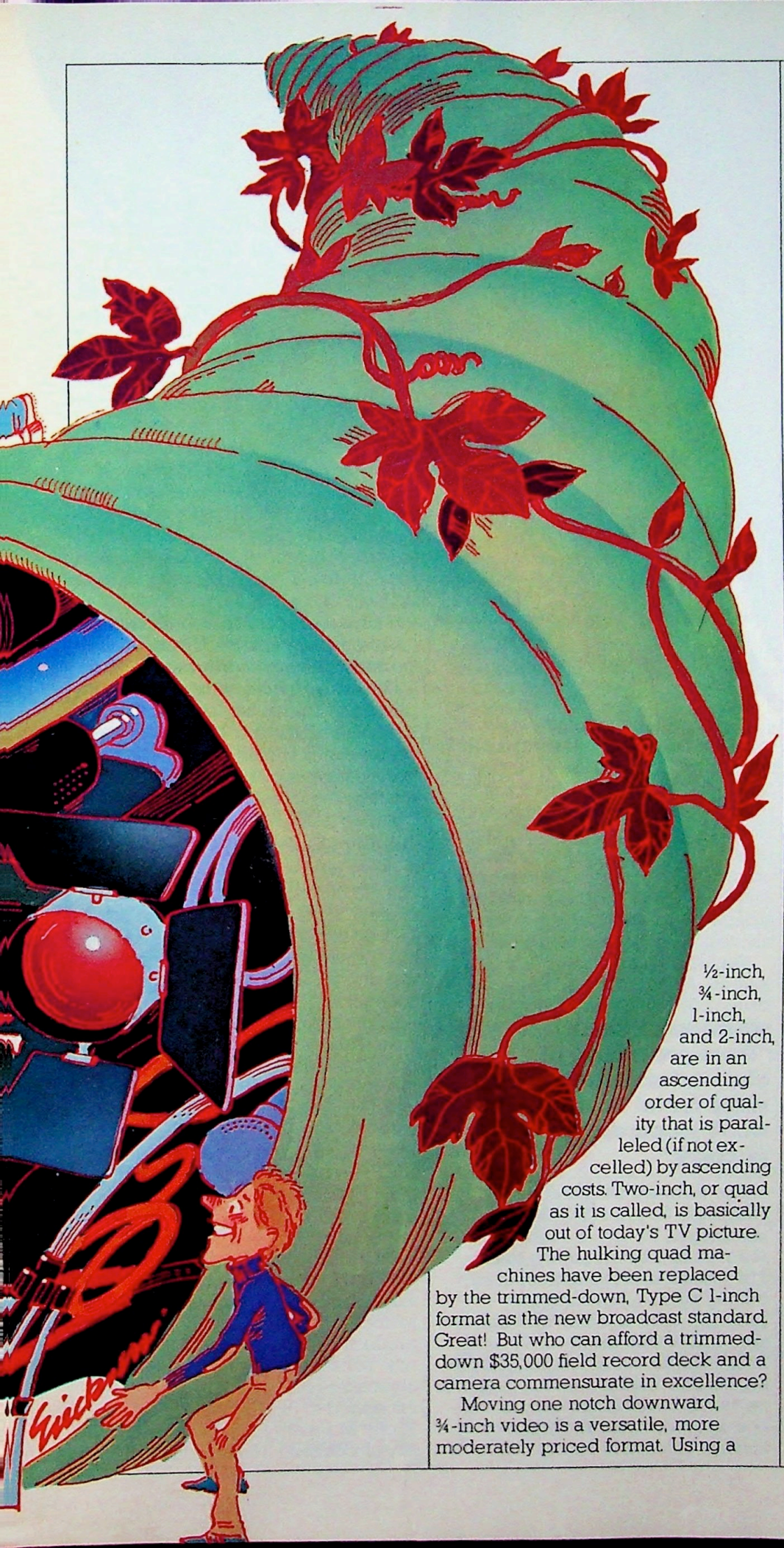
All over the country, there are colleges, media centers, cable access channels, and other institutions with video equipment readily accessible for close to nothing, in terms of money. There are handy, inexpensive workshops, community video projects in need of crews, and rental gear available for a small fraction of the purchase price. Take a look in your own neighborhood. Chances are if there's a TV signal on the tube, part of it was produced by a local group and, if you play your cards right, they might let you get your mitts on their video equipment for some real hands-on experience.

When you're starting out in video, it's certainly not wise to purchase equipment impulsively. There is a lot to learn about this electronic medium: its theories, formats, and uses. The multitude of formats, each with its own purpose, and the extensive range of hardware, means that decisions to purchase video equipment are best made after real exposure to the field.

The Format Question

The four main video formats,

Illustration by Marc Ericksen



½-inch, ¾-inch, 1-inch, and 2-inch, are in an ascending order of quality that is paralleled (if not excelled) by ascending costs. Two-inch, or quad as it is called, is basically out of today's TV picture. The hulking quad machines have been replaced by the trimmed-down, Type C 1-inch format as the new broadcast standard. Great! But who can afford a trimmed-down $35,000 field record deck and a camera commensurate in excellence?

Moving one notch downward, ¾-inch video is a versatile, more moderately priced format. Using a decent camera, you can produce a crisp image with two clear audio channels. Tape stock cost and editing capabilities make it surprisingly suitable for video art; it's also ideal for nonbroadcast work like documentaries and educational projects. And, if you keep a close eye on your specs, there's no reason why it won't be up to broadcast standards. Like a gooseneck, ¾-inch video production can assume a whole series of postures, flexible in cost and quality.

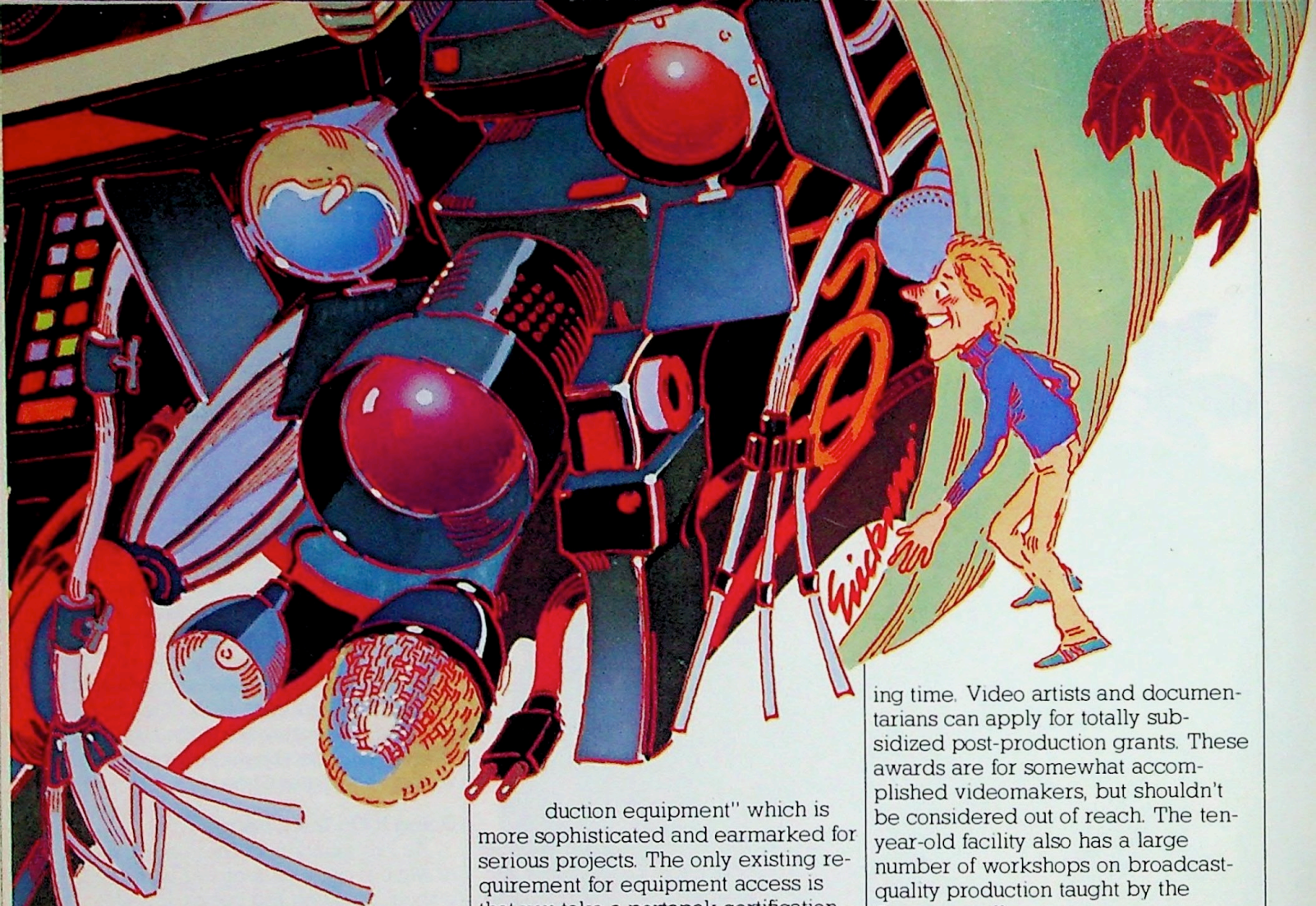
Though rarely acceptable for broadcast, ½-inch is certainly the format closest to the heart of home video fans, for the simple reason that VHS and Beta cassette recorders and one-tube cameras are relatively cheap. Moreover, recent improvements in Beta VCRs allow them to be interfaced with sophisticated editing units for complex, professional post-production. And many cable systems, free of strict FCC regulations, will air work originated on ½-inch. The Sony ½-inch B&W portapaks of the late '60s started the video boom and the reverberations haven't ceased.

Doing It On The Cheap

As I've mentioned, there are a host of ways to get your feet wet in video without investing big bucks. If you're lucky enough to have a friend who owns video gear, coerce him or her into lending it to you . . . or, at least, letting you come along on some shoots. Once you're behind the electronic viewfinder, you may put your feet up and never leave that "color bar lounge."

No friends? There's always commercial rentals. But let me warn you: commercial rates can put a hole in your wallet a truck could drive through. Day rates for a simple ½-inch rig run about $50 and up; for more sophisticated hardware the daily tariff can jump to hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

Don't look so grim. There are a bevy of alternatives to commercial rental houses even if your friends don't pan out. And they won't jeopardize your T-bill account. The most obvious place to look is your local college. Broadcast and Mass Communications departments are often well-equipped with both studio and electronic field production (EFP) equipment. The *Educational Media Yearbook* (published by Libraries Unlimited, Inc., P.O. Box 263, Littleton,



CO 80160) has an extensive listing of graduate programs in media fields which will set you off in the right direction. Once you locate a college with the appropriate department, you may have to enroll in a production class and spend four months staring at blackboards before you get "hands-on" experience. But in a technical field like video, the rigors of education have their advantages. And their semester units.

Academic Angles

If you are lucky, you can avoid the academic bind. Often, colleges establish video centers that serve both the student body and the community. Up in Minneapolis, you can find just such a facility attached to the University of Minnesota, aptly called University Community Video (UCV, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455). Funded in part by student fees, UCV is open to public use on a "first-come, first-served, nondiscriminatory basis." They have two systems: "general access equipment" consisting of ½-inch and low-level ¾-inch gear and "production equipment" which is more sophisticated and earmarked for serious projects. The only existing requirement for equipment access is that you take a portapak certification workshop. This is a common practice (and actually quite useful) so don't shudder at the thought. Besides, it offers a chance to hobnob with other videomakers, and decreases your chances of embarassment in the field.

Synapse Video Center (103 College Pl., Syracuse, NY 13210) is the behemoth of university-affiliated media facilities. Disguised as the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications by day, at night Synapse is a well-mannered editing studio. They've got everything from quad editing with a CMX computer-assisted editor, to a 1-inch off-line system, and ¾-inch rough-cut. A large multi-camera studio is at your disposal, but little field production gear is to be found. Beyond their mammoth post-production menu, Synapse has another delectable feature: free editing time. Video artists and documentarians can apply for totally subsidized post-production grants. These awards are for somewhat accomplished videomakers, but shouldn't be considered out of reach. The ten-year-old facility also has a large number of workshops on broadcast-quality production taught by the Synapse staff.

"There are a bevy of alternatives to commercial video rental houses that won't jeopardize your T-bill account."

Media Center Opportunities

After you've given the college circuit the third degree, the next realm to enter is the media arts centers. Usually these facilities need a substantial audience to support them so they are limited to larger towns and college communities. If you can't find one immediately, call your local PBS station and talk to the program manager. The odds are they have collaborated on past programs with nearby media centers and have dedicated at least one Rolodex card to them. You could also try the Chamber of Commerce. On occasion, they have film/tape councils to support the industry.

"What exactly is a media arts center?" you may ask. Your typical center is a conglomerate of struggling videomakers who have secured grant monies to provide free or subsidized production equipment to the community. Many such centers began as filmmaker coalitions and have since expanded to include video. The Rocky Mountain Film Center (University of Colorado, Hunter 102, Boulder,

CO 80309) and the Northwest Film Study Center (Portland Art Museum, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205) are two such places. The one generalization that can be made is that media arts centers are all different. They have their own personalities, prides, and pet projects.

New York is one state that is chock full of media centers. In New York City alone, there are three major facilities. The Downtown Community Television Center (153 Centre St., NY, NY 10013) has been supplying free ½-inch and ¾-inch equipment since 1971. Their interest lies in documentary and community service projects as can be seen from their annual video festival dedicated to such worthy videotapes. Global Village (454 Broome St., NY, NY 10013), perhaps the oldest of the media centers, offers limited access to ½-inch and ¾-inch gear. Their desire to aid in the production of broadcast-quality documentaries restricts the use of their facility. However, they have an excellent assortment of workshops on production and editing. And, though still deeply involved in film, Young Filmmakers/Video Arts (YF/VA, 4 Rivington St., NY, NY 10002) seems to have a little of everything when it comes to video: ½-inch and ¾-inch editing, ¾-inch field VCRs, and a three-camera studio. Just like department stores, YF/VA runs midsummer sales, discounting rental fees.

Your options start to thin out a bit as you move away from the island Manhattan. But in upstate New York, you have three more giants — Media Study (207 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, 14202), the Experimental TV Center in Binghamton (164 Court St., 13901), and Portable Channel in Rochester (8 Prince St., 14607). And over in Hartford, Connecticut, there's a small but active group called Montevideo (P.O. Box 3537, 06103). The Daniel Wadsworth Memorial Video Festival is just one of their exhibition events, but the real substance lies in their equipment rentals. A sliding scale governs access fees to ¾-inch color and ½-inch portapaks and a complete ¾-inch editing system. Massachusetts houses the Boston Film/Video Foundation (BF/VF, 39 Brighton Ave., Allston, MA 02134). Extensive equipment is available by arrangement with the new Television Workshop at WGBH, the local PBS station. To gain full entrance to BF/VF facilities, a $150 equipment fee is required: a bargain at twice the price.

Action In The South

Below the Mason/Dixon line, you can find IMAGE Atlanta (972 Peachtree St., Suite 213, Atlanta, GA 30309) hard at work tweaking their hardware. A very active media center, they have a monthly newsletter (as do other similar groups), videotape exhibitions, and equipment access to both ½-inch and ¾-inch. Farther south, the New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC, 2010 Magazine St., LA 70130) produces their own community information videotapes and offers workshops in media skills. They don't have elaborate facilities (equipment is limited to ½-inch), but what they have is available at a minimal fee.

More Video Centers and Resources

In addition to the video organizations discussed in the text, here's a state-by-state listing of other video resources nationwide:

Alabama
Alabama Filmmakers Co-op
4333 Chicksaw Dr.
Huntsville, AL 35901
205/534-3247

Arizona
Southwestern Film Consortium
604 6th Ave.
Tuscon, AZ 85701
602/792-9202

California
Community Video Center
211 E St., 3rd Fl.
San Diego, CA 92101
714/449-4321

Ya-Ka-Ama Video
6215 Eastside Rd.
Healdsburg, CA 95448
707/887-1542

Colorado
Grass Roots Television
PO Box 2006
Aspen, CO 81611
303/925-7784

Kentucky
Appalshop, Inc.
Box 734
Whitesburg, KY 41858
606/633-5708

Louisiana
Center for New American Media
PO Box 53163
New Orleans, LA 70117
504/944-5386

Maine
Maine Alliance of Media Arts
Box 4320, Station A
Portland, ME 04103
207/773-1130

Minnesota
Film-in-the-Cities
2388 University Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55114
612/646-6104

Montana
Montanans for Quality Television
Rm. 351, First Federal Bldg.
Missoula, MT 59801
406/543-6333

New Hampshire
New Hampshire Media Foundation
Phenix Hall, 40 N. Main St.
Concord, NH 03301
603/224-1984

New Mexico
Rising Sun Media Arts Center
PO Box 148
Santa Fe, NM 87501
503/221-1156

New York
Foundation for Independent Video and Film Makers
625 Broadway
New York, NY 10012
212/473-3400

North Carolina
North Carolina Independent Film and Video Association
Educational Media Dept.
Appalachian State University
Boone, NC 28608
704/262-2243

Ohio
Athens Ctr. for Film and Video
Dept. of Film
383 Lindley Hall
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701
614/594-6888

Toledo Media Project
2232 Parkwood, #5
Toledo, OH 43620
419/537-4350

Pennsylvania
Philadelphia Independent Film/Video Association
3701 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215/387-5125

Pittsburgh Filmmakers
PO Box 7467
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
412/681-5449

South Carolina
Coalition of Southern Media Organizations
814 S. Holly
Columbia, SC 29205
803/256-8336

South Carolina Arts Commission
1800 Gervais St.
Columbia, SC 29201
803/758-7942

Tennessee
Center for Southern Folklore
PO Box 40105
Memphis, TN 38104
901/726-4205

Texas
Southwest Alternative Media Project
1506½ Branard
Houston, TX 77006
713/522-8592

Utah
Utah Media Center
20 Southwest Temple
Salt Lake City, UT 84101
801/328-4201

Vermont
Image Co-op
39 Barret St.
Montpelier, VT 05602
802/229-4508

Virginia
Washington Area Film and Video League
9451 Arlington Blvd., #302
Fairfax, VA 22030
703/827-7740

Virgin Islands
Caribbean Center for Understanding Media
PO Box 1037, Kinshill
St. Croix, VI 00850
809/772-1557

Washington
Seattle Association for Media Artists
83 Columbia, 4th Floor
Seattle, WA 98104
206/624-8627

Wisconsin
Wisconsin Institute for Intermedia Studies
853 Williamson St.
Madison, WI 53703
608/257-6984

Quick & Dirty Video Glossary

Beta & VHS: Half-inch videocassette recorders (VCR) have two standard yet incompatible formats. The difference between them is in the way the tape is threaded in the VCR and the angle at which the signal is recorded on the videotape.

Colorizing: Color levels on a video signal are often manipulated for artful effects. This can be done by misaligning color, hue, or saturation during recording or editing. More sophisticated colorizing involves using a device that generates its own color signal and can amplify, distort, or even synthesize color levels on the videotape.

Computer-Assisted Editing: A standard edit controller reacts only to immediate and simple commands. With their programmed operations and memory capabilities, computer-assisted controllers can perform complex, multi-command edits. CMX introduced computerized editing devices in 1975.

Edit Controller: Many videotape decks have built-in but limited editing capabilities. To enhance their operations, external "controllers" have been designed to give the two or more decks involved in the editing process (the transfer of video images from one tape source to another) a greater variety of commands.

Electronic Field Production (EFP): A general term used to specify on-location production performed with portable video equipment. Similar to EFP, electronic news gathering (ENG) is the process of covering journalistic events with highly portable ¾-inch gear.

Electronic Viewfinder: A tiny monitor attached to the camera that allows you to see the "real-time" incoming signal. These monitors often have 2-inch screens.

Fine-Cut: Video editing is performed in two stages. The first of these, the crude assembly of preliminary sequences, is called the rough-cut. The final edit, with its precisely timed sequences, exact audio mix, and special effects, is the fine-cut.

Frame Accurate: There is no physically apparent frame on videotape, no sprockets, or borders. However, the cathode ray tube (CRT) in the camera scans the image field in 1/30th of a second, creating a discrete electronic frame. When editing, each frame is given a location, marked by an electronic pulse. An editing controller that can repetitively return to the exact same location would be called "frame accurate."

Monitor: A TV set that does not have a tuner/receiver for broadcast signals and is used to display video signals during production and editing. Monitors are often designed for higher image resolution and greater latitude in correcting color balance than conventional TV sets.

Narrowcast: A video signal with a narrow receiving area (such as microwave, cable, and closed-circuit TV). This term has also come to mean programming delivered to a specific audience.

Off-Line: See **On-Line**.

On-Line: Post-production houses usually have a master edit system that allows immediate use of all technical capabilities, e.g., character generator, switcher, time-base correctors, and audio mixer. A direct link to the master system is termed on-line. A less sophisticated system that requires patching-in (see **Patch Panel**) to additional electronic gear, or physically moving it, would be called off-line.

Patch Panel: These are terminals with predesignated outlets that allow you to reroute the function of equipment while keeping the gear stationary. The use of such a panel is called patching-in.

Portapak: A generic term for portable video systems; the term was originally introduced by Sony to describe their early ½-inch video system.

Rough-Cut: See **Fine-Cut.**

Switcher: An electronic device that can mix video signals from multiple sources, such as cameras and decks, and retain a stable signal. More sophisticated switchers can execute fades, wipes and other effects.

Three-Tube Color Camera: Video cameras are designed with one to three tubes. The tubes in a camera scan a surface that is stimulated by incoming light and translate that scan into a video signal. In one-tube cameras, white light strikes a single tube and is translated into a signal. Three-tube cameras break the incoming light down into its three primary color components, assigning each color to a separate tube. The three-tube process allows for greater sensitivity to light and greater manipulation of the signal.

Time-Base Corrector: An electronic device that corrects the signal from a videotape recorder by compensating for its mechanical and electronic irregularities.

Type C 1-inch Format: One-inch videotape recording has gone through three format changes during its development. Type A and B proved to be inefficient, and the industry has now standardized on Type C. The older formats, differing in tape speed, threading, and the orientation of the recorded signal, are not interchangeable. Type C has also supplanted 2-inch, or quad, as the broadcast format.

U-Matic: In the early seventies, Sony invented the ¾-inch video format. They named that format U-Matic.

VHS: See **Beta.**

White Balance: A color camera adjustment that establishes the proper white brightness reference.

The midriff of America has a sprinkling of media centers. For a mere $20/year, you can become a member of Double Helix in St. Louis (3704 La Clede, MO 63108) and gain access to a full complement of ½-inch equipment. They ask for an additional fee of $10/day for rental, but a persuasive argument can get volunteer time exchanged for the quickly diminishing dollar. Up above the tree-line in Aspen, you can find the Rocky Mountain Center for Cinema and Television Arts (Aspen Center, Maroon Creek Rd., Box 2540, CO 81612). A collection of small format video appliances is enhanced by workshops and exhibition programs. During the summer, their Video Art Apprenticeship program allows a great opportunity to trek through the Rockies with a portapak.

In the windy city, you can find all the hardware you desire at the Chicago Editing Center (11 E. Hubbard St., 5th Floor, Chicago, IL 60611). A fairly advanced ¾-inch editing system with a Convergence computer

"All over the country, there are colleges, media centers, cable access channels, and other institutions with video equipment readily accessible for close to nothing, in terms of money."

editing board sits at the apex of an equipment pyramid that builds upon a second ¾-inch system and a frame-accurate, ½-inch reel-to-reel ensemble. They also have portable color recording gear. A quarterly membership of $100 gets you free use of the ½-inch editing system and all playback capabilities. For an extra $75/day, you can rent a color camera and adjust its white balance by focusing on the stark Sullivan buildings.

Options On The Coast

Out West, you can traverse the entire coast, visiting a healthy handful of media centers. The "and/or," a contemporary arts center in Seattle (1525 10th Ave., WA 98122), has the prodigiously named Philo T. Farnsworth Memorial Video Editing Facility. New users of the facility must participate in a training session and then bear $100/day for the ¾-inch system. Crossing the stateline, Portland's Video Access Project (117 NW 5th

Continued on pg. 34

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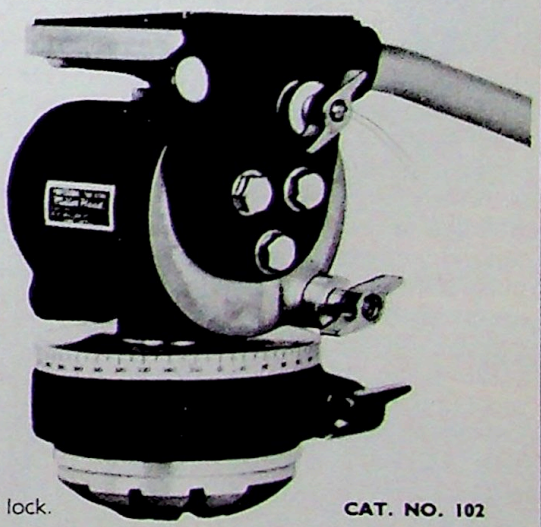

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ERIC KNORR

How two imaginative young filmmakers pooled their talents to become Colossal Pictures, a small company with a giant reputation for animation and special effects technology...

Colossal Adventures

City-dwellers are notoriously unflappable. Only something truly extraordinary will make them take a second glance—the merely 'odd' isn't worth the double take. But when a pair of ten-foot-long shoes stalked downtown San Francisco, even the most jaded bystanders were nonplussed.

An amused yet puzzled crowd watched as several apparently deranged individuals moved the mammoth footwear back and forth on the concrete. Who was behind this gargantuan shuffle? Pranksters? Ad men?

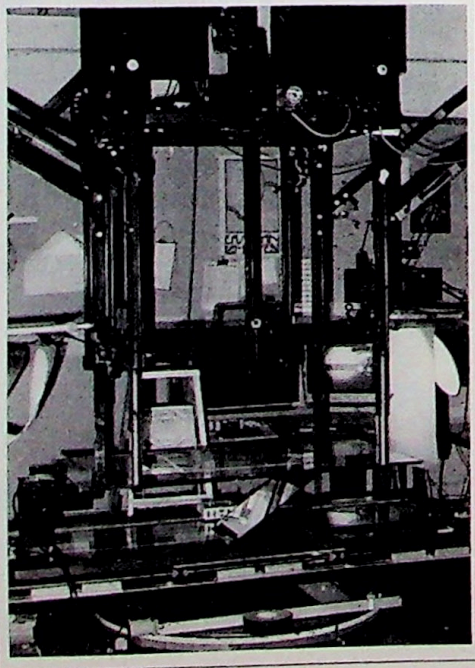
The onlookers had no way of knowing, but they were witnessing the production of another inspired spectacle by the animation and special effects wizards from Colossal Pictures. The Colossal people had strayed from their studio again, in search of some footloose action for a rock'n'roll promotional film whose deadline was fast approaching. I asked co-founder Drew Takahashi where they got the inspiration for the piece.

"We were desperate," admitted Drew. "We needed something 'out there,' something striking. We built the shoes and found they barely fit on the elevator." The shoes were animated by shooting them frame-by-frame in various stages of stepping. "A whole busload of Japanese tourists tried to get in the act. They thought we were part of the regular tour."

Profitable Versatility

As you might imagine, Colossal Pictures is not the kind of animation studio in which animators are chained to their drawing tables, scrawling the same cuddly cartoon characters over and over. Colossal's talented staff has employed just about every animation technique available, from pixillation to clay, plus some new methods they've researched and developed on their own. Their diversity allows them to discard the traditional division of labor found in most animation studios. On each project, vital positions such as director and layout artist can be rotated according to a staff member's area of specialization.

Despite its complex appearance, Colossal's 'Marv' is a versatile and easy-to-operate animation stand.



Half the studio's busy schedule is devoted to the production of animated television commercials for the likes of Levi-Strauss, Boise Cascade, Granny Goose, and The Gap. Colossal's mastery of many formats lets them accept offers from ad agencies that other, more specialized competitors would have to turn down. Gary Gutierrez, Colossal Pictures' other cofounder, feels that commercials have been a boon in more than just a financial sense. "They offer you one of the few chances to put so much energy and capital into so short a time frame. For example, if you applied the same per-minute investment on a commercial to an animated feature film, you'd end up with a budget that would dwarf that of *Apocalypse Now*. With commercials there's fast turnaround, fast feedback, and a unique opportunity to hone your skills."

Colossal Pictures can't yet boast their own full-length animated movie, but that doesn't mean the studio is a stranger to feature films. Work on

major motion pictures is taking up an ever-increasing portion of their production schedule. The climactic race in *The Black Stallion*, an extremely complex and costly sequence, was storyboarded in Colossal's studio. Director Carroll Ballard, frustrated with trying to synchronize filming from a plethora of angles, including the vantage point of a swooping helicopter, turned to Gary and Drew's special effects expertise and had them create a detailed pictorial mock-up before shooting the final take. Ballard was so impressed with their work he commissioned them to do the title sequence, logo, and poster for the film. And Colossal recently completed the title sequence for Francis Ford Coppola's *One From the Heart*.

Wowing 'The Dead'

Gary Gutierrez had his first encounter with feature filmmaking in 1976, when The Greatful Dead asked him to create an animated introduction to the group's upcoming concert film. For an imaginative, ambitious animator, this was a dreamlike opportunity. Gary swiftly put his job with a small animation studio on the back burner and delved into Greatful Dead iconography.

Working as an independent with a healthy budget and virtually free artistic license, Gary enlisted the help of bandleader Jerry Garcia in selecting a bicentennial version of the Dead's skeleton man as central character for the piece. But the traditional cell animation mode in which he was working required the replication of a mind-boggling number of difficult-to-draw skeletons. To make his job easier he used a pre-production aide known as *photo reference*. Strutting through certain key sequences, an actor clad in a makeshift skeleton costume was photographed against a seamless background calibrated with large registration marks. An SLR with a 6-frame-per-second motor drive provided a 'real time' reference, so Gary had both traceable in-register images and lifelike motion to match. The completed work, featuring the sepulchral character dressed as Uncle Sam, zooming across a wildly metamorphic landscape on a motorbike, delighted Gary's clients and their fans alike. As a first independent project, *The Greatful Dead Movie* was an auspicious debut.

Drew Takahashi was the man zapping away with his motorized Nikon on the early stages of the Dead film. The two future partners were employed at the same studio: Drew as photographer and camera assistant, Gary in such positions as writer, director, or key animator, depending on the project. Their complementary skills meshed like magic. A part live-action, part animated segment of a PBS children's show entitled *Vegetable Soup* combined their talents so successfully that their boss, working with an overburdened schedule, suggested they do the second season on their own. His advice fell on receptive ears.

Three-and-a-half years ago, Colossal Pictures was born.

The Computer Motion Frontier

Behind Colossal's success lies a unique and profitable marriage of tireless imagination and high technology. A lion's share of the credit for the studio's position on the technological forefront of animation goes to *computer motion control* specialist Zach Bogart, a young veteran of the *Star Wars* special effects team. By applying his expertise Zach has helped streamline production and lend feasibility to Colossal's penchant for the wild and experimental.

Most jobs can be divided into two parts: meaningful work, and the time-consuming chores that keep you from getting to it. Few commercially competitive animation studios can do without computer motion control anymore, because of the time saved and versatility gained by its implementation. And for a studio that is constantly putting new ideas into practice, the reduction of time-wasting mechanical drudgery is a necessity: too much other time is spent brainstorming and gearing up for new techniques.

When Zach Bogart came on the scene, Colossal had just acquired for use as an animation stand a rather primitive computer-controlled device originally designed for a machine shop. Frustrated with its complex programming requirements, Zach appeared one day with a new pro-

Computer wizard Zach Bogart shows off Colossal's computer motion control, the key to many spectacular effects.

gram so simple a kid could use it. Soon he had constructed an entirely new modular stand from scratch. An impressed coworker christened it 'Marv.'

Marv is an admirable machine. Its 'body,' the stand itself, is one-of-a-kind in its flexibility. Most animation stands have a field 12 or 16 inches across. With a little dismantling, Marv has accommodated a field 60 inches wide. For special effects work, it has been disassembled altogether and rigged up to control the interrelated movement of miniature models.

Smart Moves

rains, though, is the machine's great asset. The Colossal team most often uses Marv's artificial intelligence in a technique called *multiplane animation*.

In this process, each plane contains one element of the final composite scene, say, a character, a foreground, and a background. They are mounted on the animation stand at varying distances from the camera, so that the animator may deftly combine disparate images or create a convincing illusion of depth. Some sequences demand the alteration of each plane by a predesignated increment every second frame, not to mention the concurrent adjustments of the animation camera itself. Trying to recall and execute all the subtle 12-change-per-second movements could send even the most dedicated and patient animator into permanent Disneyland. Happily, Marv shoulders the mind-bending burden, its electronic brain directing obedient servo-motors per preprogrammed instructions.

Painting with Light

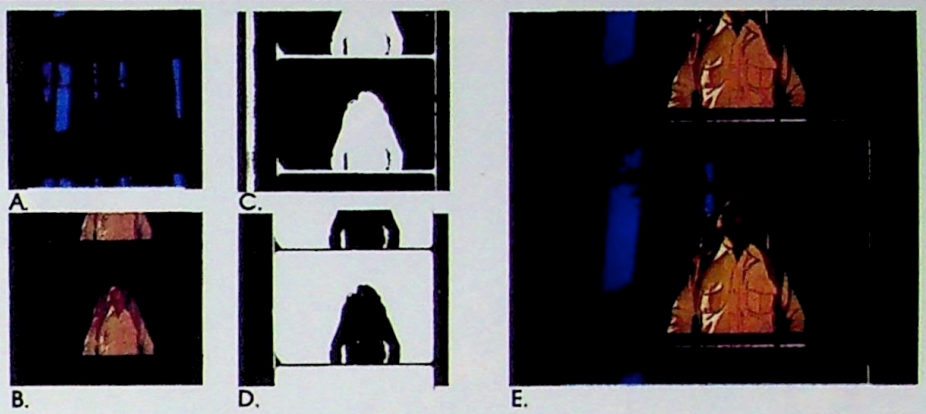
An alternate method of combining images is the *multiple pass, mask/countermask* technique. Colossal's animators often exploit this sophisticated, versatile option because it upstages other methods with its efficiency and visual elegance.

Multiple passes allow the animator to "paint with light" on film by isolating different areas of the frame. In the first pass of a given sequence, only the portion desired is exposed to light; the rest is blocked by a mask. The film is then backwound and shot again with a countermask to cover the already exposed area, while all or part of the rest of the frame gets its turn of exposure. The process continues until the final image is composed. Sometimes this procedure is done in-camera, with the masks laid on the art itself. More often, the visual elements are generated at the studio and sent to a lab to be combined through a specialized optical printing process. See the accompanying box, "The Secrets of Multiple Pass Magic".

Colossal has employed five or six passes in a single dazzling sequence, making a logo shimmer with unearthly hues, a skyscraper stream light from its windows, and a glowing city ripple and transform itself into a forest behind a moving character.

The term "melt-o-vision" aptly evokes the effect of another application of multiple exposure technique. This Colossal original makes animated movement actually appear smoother than live action.

The first pass is a standard "on twos" run (i.e., the cell is photographed twice, on two consecutive frames of film). The second pass overlaps the first, so that the second frame of one cell is superimposed on the first frame of the next. The greater the number of staggered passes, the more exaggerated the effect. What results from the melting of one image into the next is a hypnotic fluidity of motion—up to ten passes, that is. After that, the effect goes optically crazy.



The Secrets of Multiple Pass Magic

Colossal dug deep into their archives to give us an example of the *multiple pass technique*, broken down into its different stages. To combine the forest background (a) with the foreground character (b), first a mask (c) and countermask (d) have to be created. The foreground cell art is filmed over a light table to generate the mask. The film strip of the mask is bipacked in-camera (run simultaneously together) with a strip of high contrast film to generate an in-register contact print, the countermask.

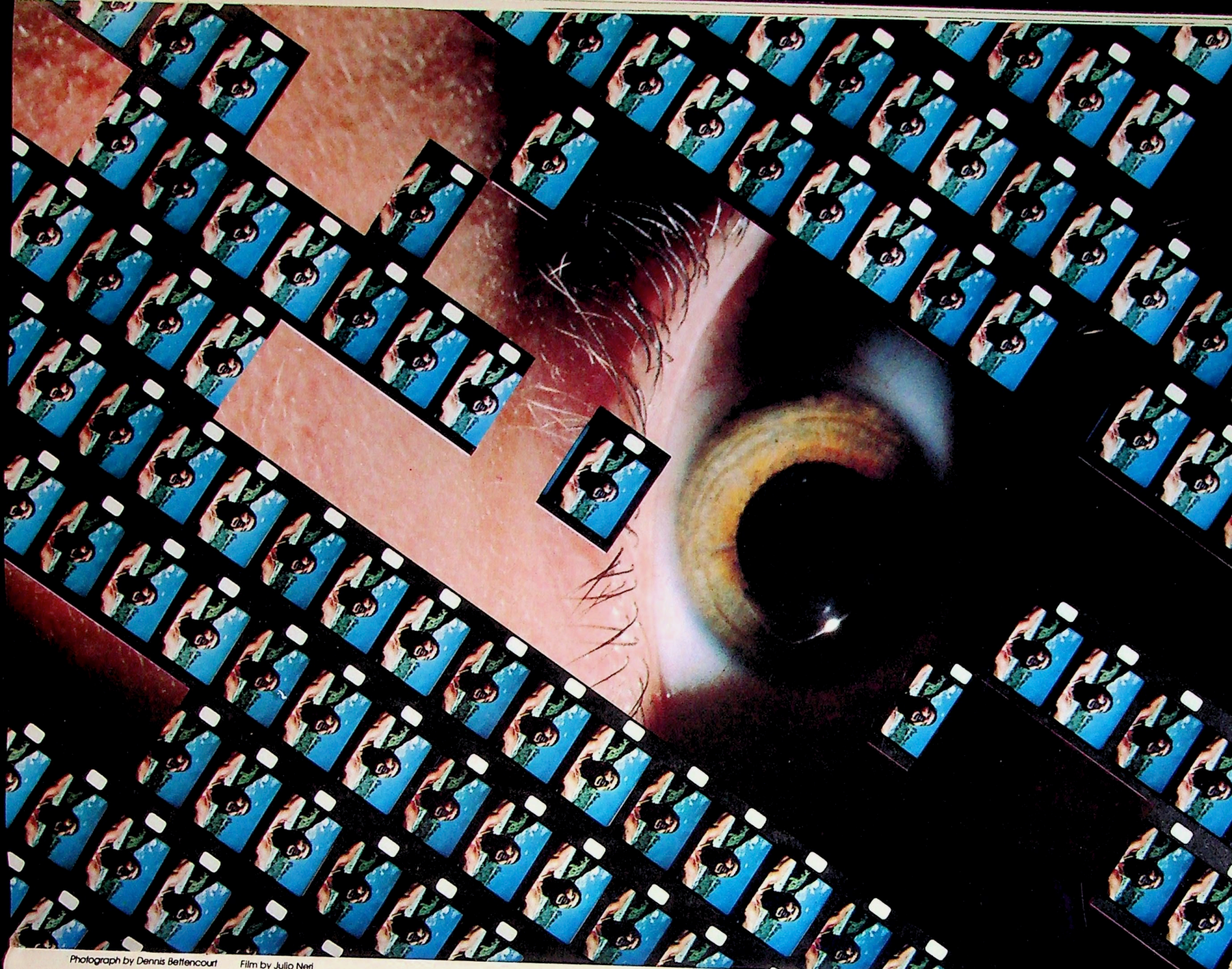
To yield the desired composite image (e), one piece of fresh film will be exposed twice. For the first pass, the background plate is bipacked with the mask in the projector of an optical printer and filmed by the printer's camera onto raw film stock. The film in the camera is then backwound to its starting point. For the second pass, the foreground is bipacked in the projector with the countermask, and the film re-exposed. Hey presto! The foreground and the background are now combined as if they'd never been apart. □

Stills Come to Life

"We're always looking for the chance to try something new. But that opportunity may be awhile in coming," Drew adds. "Right now we're just putting into practice ideas we had years ago."

In the case of *photo-motion*, they've taken the pre-production aide used in *The Greatful Dead Movie* and transformed it into a full-fledged technique. Instead of merely tracing the photographs, they are cut out, hand colored with oils, and mounted on cells for the stand. An intriguing combination of semi-photographic image and fanciful background was created in *Calling All Girls*, a promotional film produced for Warner Brothers recording artist Hilly Michaels. This time an 8-frame-per-second motor drive was used. Since standard film speed is 24 frames-per-second, the camera-ready art was shot 'on threes,' and some scenes even feature Michaels lip-synched with his vocal track. The gregarious short reveals the ratchety, stylized rock star romping in a large bowl of ice cream and cavorting with several unusual guitars, while a parade of hand colored girls provide Michaels with aggressive audience participation.

Continued on pg. 49



Photograph by Dennis Bettencourt Film by Julio Neri

BRUCE ANDERSON

What happens when a successful documentary filmmaker decides to leave the natural world behind and enter the twilight zone of the unknown? Anything and everything in between ...

Through a Lens Darkly

The possessed man gesticulated wildly. The "demon" inside him was a furious spirit, causing the man to rant, kick, and hurl objects across the room. Curses spit from his lips. He spoke in an ancient African tongue—a long-forgotten language this poor Panamanian farmer could not have known.

Julio Neri kept his Super-8 camera trained on the raving farmer as he moved stealthily around the perimeter of the room, keeping a safe distance. He watched the man's arms snapping up and down like a marionette's. Neri quickly checked the camera's sound level and footage counter, and continued shooting. Suddenly, as he focused on the man's twisted face and saw the grim eyes of madness looking straight at him, all hell broke loose...

Maverick international filmmaker Julio Neri was at it again, using Super-8 as a production medium for his latest 35mm theatrical release. The film, *El Hacedor de Milagros* (translated, "The Miracle Maker"), plunges the viewer into the bizarre world of psychic phenomena—including exorcism, voodoo rites, and psychic surgery. Without a doubt, *El Hacedor de Milagros* represents the outer limits of cinéma vérité.

The Controversial Exorcist

Filming the exorcism of the Panamanian farmer was like shooting the ring scenes for Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull*. The possessing demon was wild, violent, unpredictable. For Neri there was barely time to think in the maelstrom that engulfed the tiny room of a psychiatric clinic in Panama City. Focus, frame, sound—it was all guesswork, strictly shoot-from-the-hip filmmaking. Neri counted on his instincts and his years of experience. He had filmed the mass hysteria of political rallies during the making of *Electofrenia*, his Super-8 documentary on the 1978 Venezuelan national elections, which was also enlarged to 35mm for theatrical distribution. But no experience could have prepared Neri for the terrifying scene he was about to film.

"*El Hacedor de Milagros* ('The Miracle Maker') plunges the viewer into the bizarre world of psychic phenomena—including exorcism, voodoo rites, and psychic surgery. Without a doubt, the film represents the outer limits of cinema verite."

The possessed man was barking and growling now. He jerked and flailed about like a dangling doll in the hands of a mad puppeteer. Everyone in the room kept a distance. All except a darkly bearded man who stood out in the middle of the room, facing the farmer, watching his every move intently. The bearded man was stocky, broad-shouldered, with a commanding presence that was unsettling to the demonized farmer. Neri's camera shifted back and forth between the two men.

The man with the beard was Ivan Trilha, a renowned psychic healer. *El Hacedor de Milagros* is a film about this controversial man, a "miracle maker" to thousands of believers worldwide. His work took many forms; at the moment Trilha was an exorcist. With dark, penetrating eyes, he looked the part.

Neri had seen Trilha at work many times over the past year and a half while following the psychic across Central and South America. Trilha's "healings" often took the form of physical confrontations. This exorcism in Panama was typical. Neri braced himself for the battle shaping up in front of his lens. He was shooting with a Chinon 200/8XL sound camera and using a 200-foot cartridge which he hoped would go the distance.

Trilha made the first move. He rushed the farmer and wrestled to get a grip on his arms and shoulders. The man kicked and screamed trying to break free. Neri tightened the frame until the viewfinder was filled with their struggle. Trilha was baring his teeth with exertion; the farmer was panic-stricken. Both brows were bathed in sweat. With great caution, the filmmaker moved even closer towards the frenzied action.

Closing in on the Devil

In *El Hacedor de Milagros*, the struggle is caught in intimate detail by the close-up lens. Holding the possessed man from behind, Trilha presses his fingers deep into the man's throat, aiming at the larynx, the most obvious manifestation of the demon—its strange barking voice. Choking under the exorcist's powerful hands, the farmer can do little but gasp for air. In a deep, resonant voice, Trilha commands the demon to leave. Nearly suffocating, the farmer ceases his struggle. His body falls limp. He collapses in the exorcist's arms.

For filmmaker Neri, this was a puzzling moment. Was it over? Had the demon left? Should he keep shooting? He stopped and waited. The room was silent.

Before long, the farmer regained consciousness and stood up. He quietly walked from the room with Neri following, hand-shooting as they

stepped through a door to the outside. When the two of them were alone, the man turned toward Neri and spoke. "You," he said. "Come here." They were the first coherent words the man had uttered. Neri was apprehensive and braced himself for an attack. He lowered the camera, but kept his finger on the trigger, half-consciously filming. The farmer approached him until they were face to face. For the first time, Neri could see tears in the man's eyes. The farmer leaned forward, put his head on Neri's shoulders, and sobbed like a child.

The exorcism of the poor farmer is one of many strange stories Neri tells of his experiences while making *El Hacedor de Milagros*. He was put through tough paces as a one-man camera and sound crew. Just as challenging was keeping up with Ivan Trilha, a man of mystery and strange powers. There were always unexpected surprises.

The Remarkable Gypsy Healer

Filming Trilha's controversial healing technique was the inspired idea of Julio Neri's wife and co-producer, Mercedes. She met Trilha at an exhibition of psychics and mentalists in Caracas. She proposed making a documentary and found Trilha a willing subject. He was eager to begin as soon as the filmmakers were ready.

For Julio Neri the time was ripe. *Electofrenia* had won Special Prize of the Jury at the 1979 Biarritz Film Festival. It was going into theatrical distribution in Venezuela, financed by a major film distributor. The success of the Super-8 to 35mm blow-up convinced him that a film exploring psychic healing could be handled the same way. His modus operandi: shoot and edit in Super-8 (subsidized from his own pocket), use the rough cut to seek financial backing, then fly to the United States to make the blow-up.

Before a camera was loaded, Neri researched Ivan Trilha's life. The psychic is best known in Latin America; he is treated as a Wunderkind in his native Brazil. He was brought up in the macumba church: a sect, like voodoo, that derives its rituals from Catholicism and transplanted "black magic" of African origin. At age 7, Trilha was able to recall his past lives. At age 13, his blossoming psychic powers earned him the title of "Prince" of macumba ritual throughout Brazil. By the time Trilha was 17, he was acclaimed, this time in Tokyo, to be the best psychic mentalist in the world.

Psychic Ivan Trilha "heals" a woman's eyes with needle and thread.

Trilha is somewhat of a gypsy and travels constantly, advising and performing healings all over the world. He is consulted by celebrities like French actor Alain Delon and the English rock group Pink Floyd, and has been an advisor to political figures in Latin America. Filming this extraordinary and energetic man put Neri on the road and in the air, crisscrossing Central and South America. Off-the-cuff shooting in bizarre surroundings became a way of life. Technical problems had to be solved quickly. But the bigger problem for Neri was handling his own reactions to the macabre events unfolding before the camera.

Nerve-Racking Psychic Surgery

The room looks like it might be a dining room. There's a small cabinet in the corner stocked with plates and glasses. In the foreground is a table with a fresh, white linen cloth. The setting for a quiet meal? Hardly. It's the stage for one of the most gut-

"A voodoo priestess led the filmmaker to the altar. There he was stripped to the waist and made to kneel. He eyed the strange icons glowing in the candlelight, and wondered what was next."

wrenching scenes in *El Hacedor de Milagros*: a cancer operation performed without anesthetics, without scalpel or suture, without so much as a Band-Aid.

Neri planned to keep the camera running continuously so there would be no question about the authenticity of the surgery. He filmed with the Chinon camera and a fresh 200-foot cartridge — 13½ minutes of uninterrupted shooting. Neri had become accustomed to filming Trilha's "operations." There was a certain detachment behind the camera. "When you're shooting," says Neri, "you sort of forget about what's happening in front of the lens. You try to frame, to focus. You worry about sound. You worry so much that what you're filming doesn't affect you." Even so, this particular operation caused him to lose his cool, and nearly his camera.

Julio Neri (extreme left) films an exorcism performed by "miracle maker" Ivan Trilha.

There were six people in the room focusing their attention — their "psychic energy" — on a middle-aged man lying on a table, his right pant leg rolled above his knee. The man's fingers fidgeted with the edges of the linen tablecloth. He repeatedly lifted his head to look at the exposed leg. There was a bulge the size of a golf ball protruding from the calf. The bulge was a malignant tumor.

Trilha was about to begin. In his hand was a pair of scissors. He spoke words of reassurance to the patient; the man had taken no painkillers, his faith placed solely in Trilha. But as Trilha started to cut into the leg with the scissors, the man cried out. Trilha checked again — the man felt no pain, only fear.

As the psychic continued to make an incision, Neri continued filming everything in close-up. Through the earphones came another shriek from the patient. Trilha shouted words of encouragement to him, and kept cutting with urgency. Neri was overwhelmed with sight and sound. He felt nauseous, dizzy; the camera was slipping from his hands. He felt himself black out and collapse to the floor. Across from Neri, one of Trilha's assistants also fainted, falling onto the table, across the terrified patient.

In those split seconds, someone had grabbed Neri and prevented him from dropping the camera. The filmmaker revived, took a deep breath, and resumed shooting. This time he put aside squeamishness and captured the operation in its entirety. In order to finish the documentary, he knew that he had to control his personal shock at Trilha's brutal techniques. But no matter how hard he tried, Neri couldn't avoid getting caught in the hypnotic web of a voodoo ritual that was soon to come.

The Pleasures of Voodoo

Moonlight is hardly the best light for documentary filmmaking. Neri could barely make out the outlines of people gathering in a small clearing surrounded by tropical forest. At the center of the clearing was a candlelit altar. Figures in black robes danced about it, singing and chanting in a trancelike state. The setting looked everything like a voodoo ritual should look. But where were the zombies, the witch doctors, the dolls with pins?

Neri half expected to see these trappings of Hollywood "B" movies. After all, voodoo was based on primitive African rites, a belief in sorcery, and the power of charms. He had also learned that anything could happen at ceremonies where Trilha officiated.

"The possessing demon was wild, violent, unpredictable. For Neri there was barely enough time to think in the maelstrom that engulfed the tiny room of a psychiatric clinic in Panama City."

The filmmaker began shooting, using high-speed Ektachrome 160 in a Sankyo XL sound camera. It's a film stock he prefers not to use because of its poor reproductive qualities (increased grain, loss of color saturation), especially when blown up to 35mm. But for moonlit and candlelit settings, there was little choice. Neri would have to concentrate on close shots, using a small Chinon 20-watt movielight for extra illumination.

In this night of sorcery, Neri wasn't allowed to film for very long. The camera was gently taken from him. Trilha reassured him there was no harm in joining the ritual in progress. He then introduced Neri to Anna Branch, a voodoo priestess who practices her art in the Caribbean and in the southern United States. She led the filmmaker to the altar. There he was stripped to the waist and made to kneel. He eyed the strange icons glowing in the candlelight of the altar, and wondered what was next.

Three novices assisting the voodoo priestess chanted a hypnotic spell as Branch and Trilha positioned themselves on either side of the filmmaker. An assistant poured alcohol on their hands while another set the doused hands on fire. Blue flames slapped down on Neri's head and shoulders. He began to feel relaxed, secure, even light-headed.

"After the alcohol," recalls Neri, "the two of them rubbed me, one on each side. It was like a massage. I was dimly aware of the others chanting, and began to feel like I was in a trance. All my anxiety, my fears about

what might be done to me were gone. I was floating. I felt wonderful."

Far from the spells of evil witch doctors, the voodoo practiced on Neri was a peaceful ceremony—one he wouldn't mind repeating. This was the lighter side of psychic healing, and part and parcel of *El Hacedor de Milagros*.

The Big Blow-Up

The worst part of making the film, says Neri, was the editing. The unsettling nature of many of the scenes was something Neri did not want to re-experience, especially the psychic "operations." He peeked, squinted, and cut.

The biggest post-production problem, however, was the sound track. Documentary filming with single-system cameras necessitates recording unwanted background noise such as traffic, air conditioners, and echoes from poor room acoustics.

Neri's first step in dealing with the sound quality was to transfer the sound from the original film stripe to sprocketed Super-8 fullcoat. He was then able to mix in a music track. Without further enhancement at this point, both image and sound were transferred to ¾-inch video. The video copy was to be used in approaching potential backers for funding the 35mm blow-up.

"Off-the-cuff shooting in bizarre surroundings became a way of life. Technical problems had to be solved quickly. But the bigger problem for Neri was handling his own reactions to the macabre events unfolding before the camera."

As resourceful a fund-raiser as he is a filmmaker, Neri obtained a government loan from Venezuela's Industrial Ministry, which apparently considered *El Hacedor de Milagros* a good investment. The government expected to get its money back from local distribution of the 35mm print. Loan in hand, Neri flew to San Francisco, California, to make the optical blow-up at Interformat, the same company that had enlarged Neri's previous Super-8 film, *Electofrenia*.

While Michael Hinton of Interformat made test prints of various sections of the film, Neri once again tackled sound problems. Because he had re-edited and even reshot footage since the fullcoat transfer to video, the fullcoat track was out of sync and obsolete. A new transfer had to be made and Neri sought the help of his old friend, independent filmmaker Lenny Lipton.

Laboriously, Neri and Lipton again transferred all the sound from the main track to Super-8 fullcoat, equalizing it to balance volume and reduce extraneous noise. They then skipped a sound transfer to 16mm fullcoat and set up the Super-8 fullcoat for direct transfer to 35mm optical sound track.

For the image blow-up made at Interformat, Hinton chose to use a new Kodak 35mm internegative stock that promised a sharper image with less grain. The early tests, however, showed this film required four times as much light for exposure as previous stocks. Hinton opted to stay with the new film and instead modify the optical printer to get the proper exposure. He added a special series of condenser lenses to concentrate the light

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as much as possible on the Super-8 frame. It worked and the resulting print was of superior quality. Now all that Neri needed was a test audience.

The Premier Flight & Beyond

As the audience filed into the private screening room in downtown San Francisco on a warm July evening, they found air sickness bags on their seats. Embossed on each bag was "*El Hacedor de Milagros* — Un film de Julio Neri." It was a touch of Neri's bizarre humor and promotional acumen. Nervous laughter greeted the white flight bags.

The premier showing stirred up a mixture of praise and criticism for Neri's achievement. It was just the kind of controversial reaction a filmmaker looks for. The intensity and excitement held promise for the film's immediate future at European and Latin American film festivals in France, Belgium, Cuba, Colombia,

"As the psychic continued to make an incision, Neri was overwhelmed with sight and sound. He felt nauseous, dizzy; the camera was slipping from his hands. He felt himself black out and collapse to the floor."

and other prominent places. At the Biarritz Film Festival, Neri's film proved so shocking to audiences that at least one person fainted and was carried from the theater.

While Neri is busy distributing *El Hacedor de Milagros* — he is even attempting to market the film in video format to European and American television — he is already at work on a new film project. The subject? The international world of political intrigue. It seems that while he was following Ivan Trilha's path, Neri had a rare opportunity to meet and film an interview with the late Shah of Iran, then in exile in Panama. Neri is planning to use the footage in a fictionalized "documentary" about an assassination plot on the Shah's life. Why? "I like to do crazy things," admits Neri. "I like to be unpredictable." If this new project is as mind-boggling as *El Hacedor de Milagros*, we can predict another success for one of independent filmmaking's fastest rising stars. □

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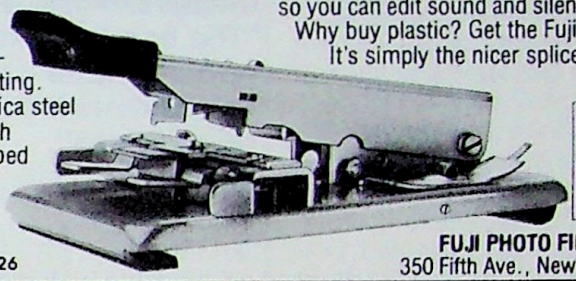

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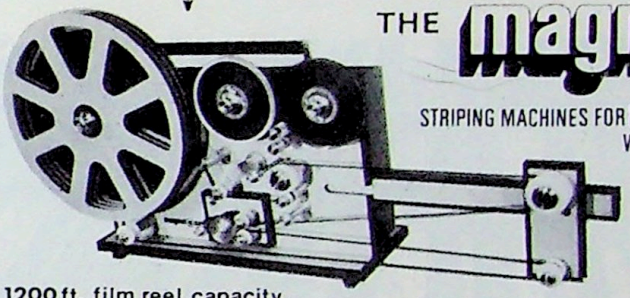

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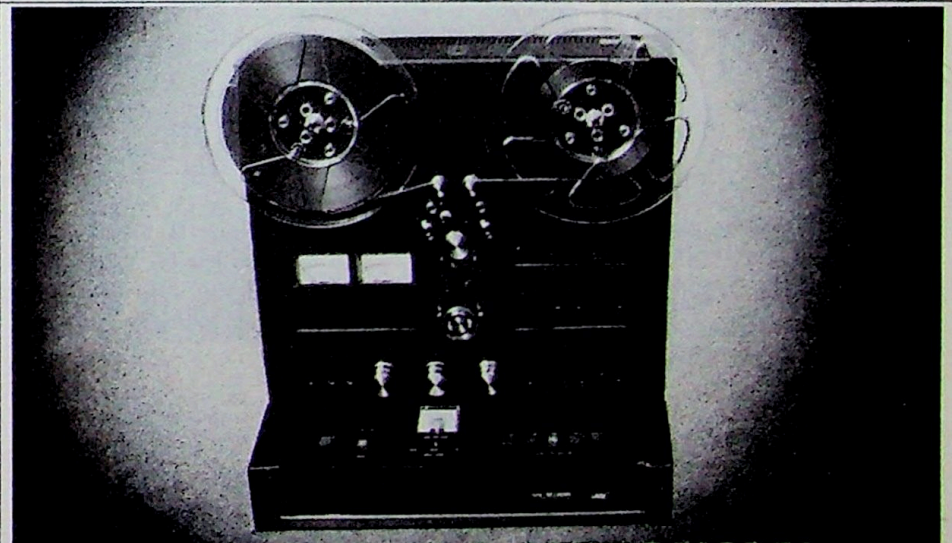

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Continued from pg. 23

Ave., Rm. 215, OR 97209) has a huge array of portapaks and editing tools. A camera and deck costs a mere $17/day and post-production comes in at $25/day.

The Golden State has numerous pockets of video activity. Around San Francisco, you can approach the Bay Area Video Coalition (2940 25th St., Room 200, San Francisco, CA 94103). A CMX computer-assisted editor is the centerpiece to one of the best non-profit facilities in the nation. Their fine-cut unit costs $100/day and for a few dollars more you get A/B rolling. A three-tube color camera with a technician to show you the ropes (and cables) comes to $175/day. For a more modest approach, you can try Marin Community Video (61 Tamal Vista, Corte Madera, CA 94925) where they still have B&W ½-inch portapaks for $10/day. Or how about Video Free America (442 Shotwell St., San Francisco, CA 94103): they offer good editing with colorizing capabilities and a broadcast-quality camera.

"The one generalization that can be made about media arts centers is that they are all different."

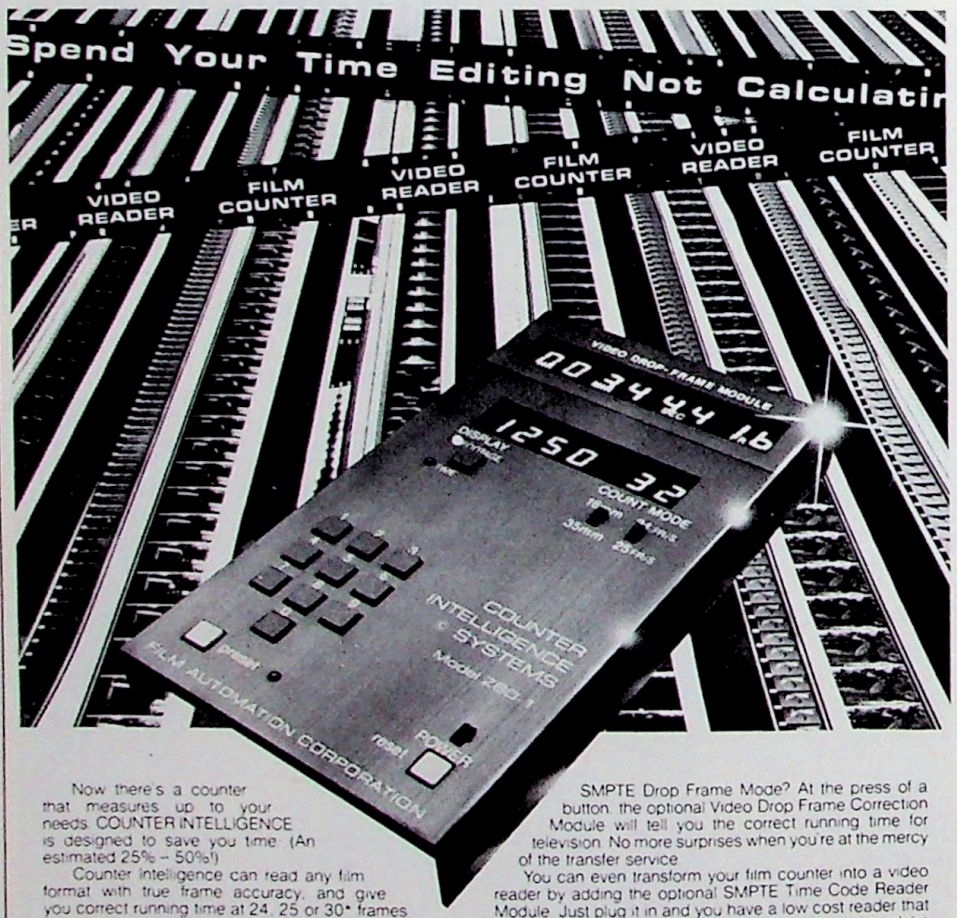
Tinsel Town, hub of the nation's commercial TV industry, also houses the Los Angeles Women's Video Center (1727 N. Spring St., 90012). They have location production gear in both ½-inch and ¾-inch formats. A large battery of workshops is propped up by interfacing with the Artists' Post-Productions Studio (APPS, 5373 E. Second St., Long Beach, CA 90803) attached to the Long Beach Museum. At APPS, you have a choice of a pretty decent fine-cut system for $75/day, rough-cut for $30/day and two field packages as low as $75/day (for the Hitachi FP 3030 camera and JVC 4400 VCR).

If you haven't stumbled across a media center (for there are many others) during your normal spinning of the dials, there are always the alternative channels. As I said earlier, the local PBS station has probably locked horns with their indigenous media center. If that contact only leads to static, try calling the state arts council. Most likely, they've dispensed various grants to your local videomakers. Still no luck? Write the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC), c/o Robert Haller, 80 Wooster St., NY, NY 10013. If NAMAC can't help you, try a private detective.

Plugging Into Cable

The final frontier for affordable access to video equipment is, of all things, the cable TV systems. Quite often, cities negotiating cable franchises insist that a public access channel be provided. These channels are either dumped on the community with little more than a free link into the cable service, or supported in varying degrees by the cable operators themselves. Regardless, production facilities sprout up around these open channels, regulated by community groups. The real thrust of public access narrowcast is to create locally-originated programming. But a second aim is to enlarge the media skills amongst members of the community. This is where you come in. As a member of the community you could have your personal media skills enlarged. It is generally preferred that the equipment be used to produce additional programming, though this is often waived. And if a solo act is unlikely, most public access groups could use an extra body on the production crew.

Throughout the country there are dozens of public access channels. Un-



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fortunately, many are underfunded and must subsist with outmoded gear and little staff. Yet in some well-organized communities, the facilities are surprisingly complete. Now in its eighth year, Austin Community Television (ACTV, P.O. Box 1076, Austin, TX 78767) has produced a whole gamut of cultural programs on cable channel 10, using available ½-inch equipment. Unlike some cable access groups, ACTV charges a $15 membership. But for that handsome sum, you get free ½-inch equipment use (upon completion of a portapak workshop). In recent months, new funding enabled them to acquire two color cameras and a switcher so their new signal will be feeding color. Members also receive a 10 percent discount on tape stock, a deal which can add hours to your video life.

The Video Access Center (VAC-7, P.O. Box 146, Columbus, IN 47201) pumps community programming over cable channel 7. After nine years, their facilities include a multi-camera studio, two editing bays, and ½-inch

"The final frontier for affordable access to video equipment is, of all things, the cable TV systems."

and ¾-inch portapaks. To qualify for equipment use, you must take a 1½-hour production workshop, scheduled on request. Five dollars covers the VAC-7 workshop and an extra $10 will get you a portapak for the weekend. When was the last time you had a $10 weekend?

Also for a ten-spot, you can become a member of York Community Access Television (YCAT, c/o York College of Pennsylvania, Country Club Rd., York, PA 17405). Full production privileges and their newsletter come with your $10. The studio, with B&W and color capabilities, is available for use; and a lengthy studio workshop will teach you the in/outs of switchers and patch panels. Portapak and editing classes are also provided to familiarize you with their equipment. Off-site access to cameras and VCRs is limited to two days, but you can have quite a shoot'em up in that time.

Scanning The Channels

These are just a few of the public access cable stations that can be ferreted out in a variety of ways. Your local cable franchise would be able to tell you about any regional channels; after all, it's their conduit. Or try your state commission on public broadcasting. Access lobbies will certainly keep them informed of any new cable conspiracies. In Washington, a media group called the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP) (call them at 202/797-3660), definitely has their finger on the pulse of access programmers. And, if all else fails, track down a copy of *Broadcasting Magazine*'s (1735 DeSales St., NW, Washington, DC 20036) annual directory of cable franchises, listing all public access channels. If these sources don't turn up anything, maybe you should start your own community cable studio.

Given a little effort you'll probably discover a variety of inexpensively acquired video equipment right in your own home town. From personal friends to friends at the University, from public media centers to public access cable channels, the options surround you. So if you're going to dabble in the video medium or go so far as to buy your own gear, plan to get some cheap hands-on experience before you take the big plunge. ☐

Steven Seid is editor of "Video Networks," a publication of the San Francisco Bay Area Video Coalition.

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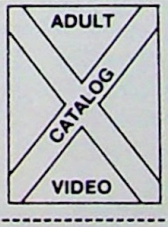

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MI

CIRCLE INFOCARD 38

Few people outside the film industry have ever heard of Stuart Ziff—but George Lucas has found his knowledge of special effects technology so indispensable that he's hired Ziff for no less than four major features, including both *Star Wars* films and the forthcoming *Revenge of the Jedi*. What Ziff has done on such films as *The China Syndrome*, *Star Trek*, and *Dragonslayer* is so unique that nobody can come up with an appropriate job title for him. With his broad background in art, engineering, and electronics, Stuart Ziff is always doing something different ...

Stuart Ziff: Special Effects Artist Extraordinaire

MI: Of all the film projects you've worked on, has there been one you consider the most satisfying?

SZ: Oh, definitely *China Syndrome*. Because I really got involved. I had a lot of responsibility and we pulled off a really amazing thing in the time allowed, in the money allowed. And we gave them what they wanted—a complete set controlled by computer that looked like the interior of a real power plant. They had originally envisioned a relatively simple system of blinking lights until we suggested the idea of using a computer to synchronize it and make it look more authentic. With the permission of the producers, we took over the look of the set from the art director and set designer. Then we ended up showing the carpenters from Local 44 where to mount things. We kept on adding to our responsibilities without quite realizing that we were risking our necks.

MI: Risking your neck, why?

SZ: Because if you have a principal responsibility and you take on added responsibilities, you simply increase your chances of failing. That's why most technicians do only what they're supposed to and that's it. We took on more because of our naiveté. When you're in the technical end of film, your goal is to be as invisible and as unnoticed as possible. If they notice you, it probably means you're holding them up.

MI: What was your screen credit on *China Syndrome*?

SZ: Special Electronics Coordinator or something like that. I don't really have a title. I think on *Empire Strikes Back* I was called Special Projects Coordinator. I forget. You see the problem is that with new film technology you're creating new jobs and new categories—"special optical effects," "special effects editing," "machinist," and so on. But I tend to jump around to all these categories and where that becomes a problem is, quite frankly, when I negotiate my wages, because the managers are usually oblivious to what I'm doing. They just think I'm machining metal, drilling holes, and cutting pieces of metal. But, in truth, I'm coordinating things.

MI: You had a small acting part in *China Syndrome* as well.

SZ: My reward, yes. Jack Lemmon comes in, turns to me and says, "Stuart, we need you down in the turbine control room at 1100." And I go, "Yes sir!" and leave. My big debut.

MI: Were you paid for that?

SZ: $225 plus $47 overtime.

MI: For saying "Yes sir!"

SZ: Well, I said it from 9:30 in the morning till 3:30 in the afternoon.

MI: While you studied engineering at UCLA and art at Cal Arts, were you developing an interest in film?

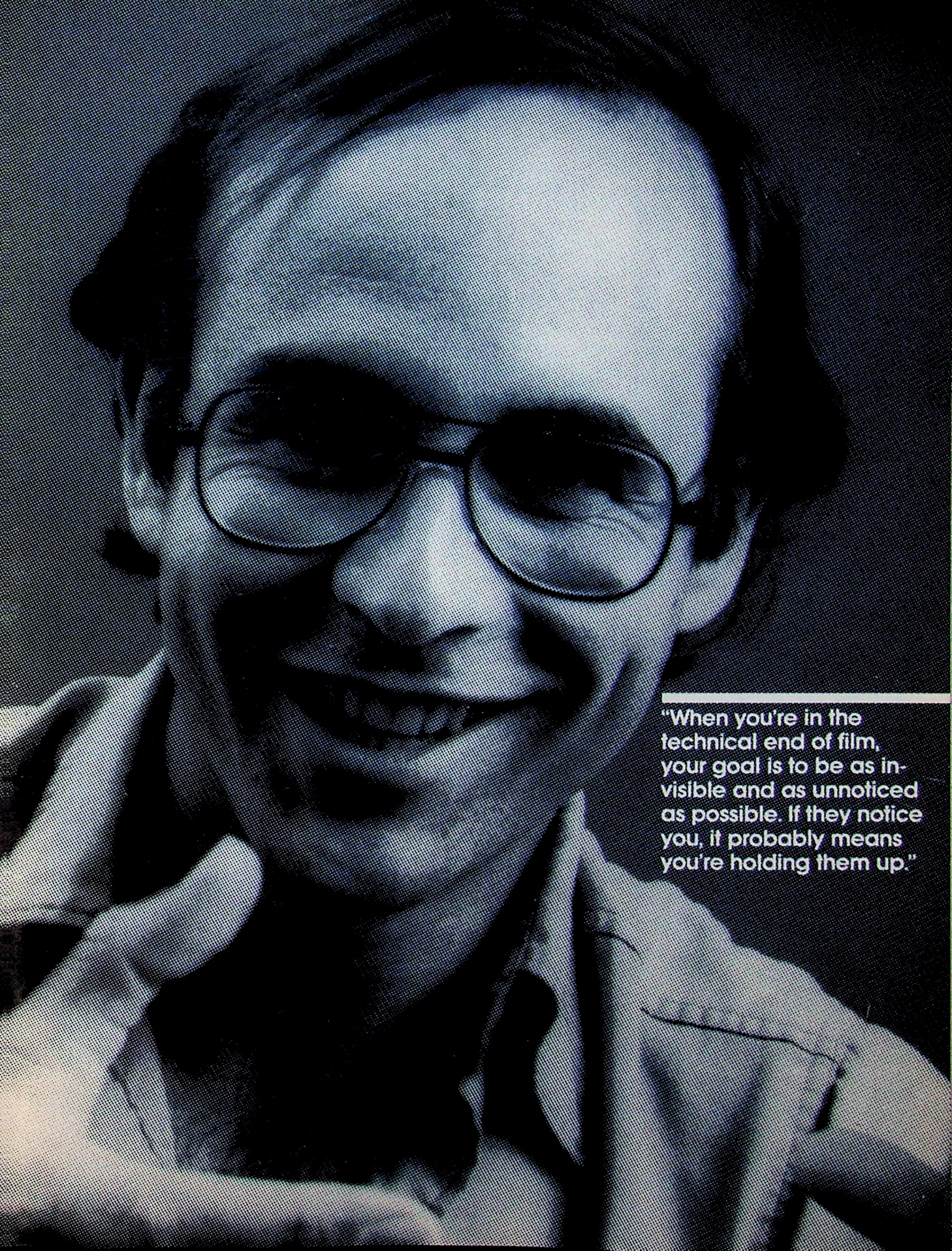
SZ: No, I never had any interest in film.

MI: Never? Not even when you were growing up?

SZ: No, no. I only got into film because I needed a job. All my friends had said, "Hey, you should do special effects," because my artwork was like that—you know, mechanical things out of glass and neon . . .

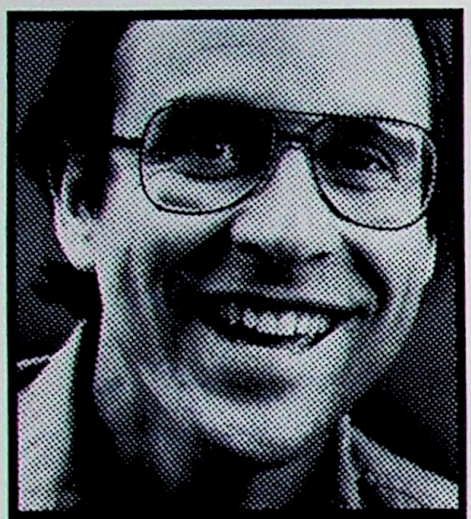
MI: Alright, so how did that first job

Photographs by Ed Kashi


"When you're in the technical end of film, your goal is to be as invisible and as unnoticed as possible. If they notice you, it probably means you're holding them up."

come about?

SZ: Well, I've got a story — I was living above a gay Mexican bar in L.A. right near all the effects houses, where I'd go in and show my slides and other stuff. Everyone would say, "Great, don't call us, we'll call you." And



"To have a sincere desire, to say that you're trainable, to say that you have a Darth Vader costume and that you've seen *Star Wars* 27 times — not only will that *not* get you into film, it'll get you off the phone."

finally I talked to this friend, Thom Mount, who is now a very important young executive at Universal. And my desperation came through. A couple of days later I was called by someone at Universal offering me a job on *Jaws II* — but I turned it down.

MI: Wait a minute, you lost me. You didn't want to work on *Jaws*?

SZ: No. And my reason was that I knew I had to move out of that house above the bar and it would probably take me months to relocate and I didn't want to househunt while I was working. Also, I think I was frightened of going to work.

MI: You know how many people would kill to get a job offer like that?

SZ: Well, I did feel really bad after I'd refused it. I remember a note I wrote to myself: "Today I am a fool!" But actually, it turned out to be one of the best things I could've done because a couple of weeks later, I had an interview with John Dykstra and Bob Shepherd and was hired onto *Star Wars*. I think I was so cheap that they couldn't refuse me, quite frankly.

MI: What did you charge?

SZ: $5 an hour. And two days later I upped it to $7. At that time I just didn't know what people were getting paid.

MI: What did you do on *Star Wars*?

SZ: I was the first person, from what I understand, to build a neon pylon. That is, the models are heavy and have to be moved by a rod. The problem is, how do you conceal that rod. They thought they could paint it to match the background, but it showed up on film. So I said, "Why don't I try something?" Instead of wood, I used glassblowing, with neon and glass, and it worked out. From what I understand, that's since become an industry standard. But what I did was fundamental. I just happened to be at the right place at the right time.

MI: You quit *Star Wars* before completion of the film, didn't you?

SZ: I wanted to go back to my artwork. I was frustrated. And it's happened on most film jobs. I just get bored. I mean I really like to experiment and do new things. But when it comes to the end run of a picture, you're just grinding it out.

Well, anyway, at that time nobody knew how big *Star Wars* was going to be. Before it was released, some people went up to the producer, Gary Kurtz, and said, "Hey Gary, should we buy stock in 20th Century-Fox?" And Gary said, "Keep your money in the bank." I went to my stockbroker and said, "Hey, I'm working on this film. I mean it's going to be great!" And he says, "How can one film affect a major corporation?" Since then my stockbroker always asks what films I'm working on.

MI: When you leave a film to go back to your artwork, what is it you do?

SZ: Glassblowing. I fill some pieces with gas. I have some electronic circuits I've made, usually to make the neon blink in varied patterns. And the joke is that, inevitably, I end up using the same stuff in film. For example, some of the neon tubes I did were used on models in *Star Wars* and *Empire Strikes Back*.

MI: When you're accepting or not accepting a job, do you take into consideration whether or not you think the film is going to be a good one?

SZ: No, I don't. But I've had incredible luck. *Star Trek* was my first bomb. But even that made its money back, if you evaluate things that way.

I've worked on *Empire Strikes Back*, *Dragonslayer*, and now I'm working on *Revenge of the Jedi*. Incredible luck for someone who's just one of the dirtballs.

MI: What's a dirtball?

SZ: A dirtball is someone who's up to his elbows in grease and goes "Uh-huh" a lot.

MI: Have you considered making your own films?

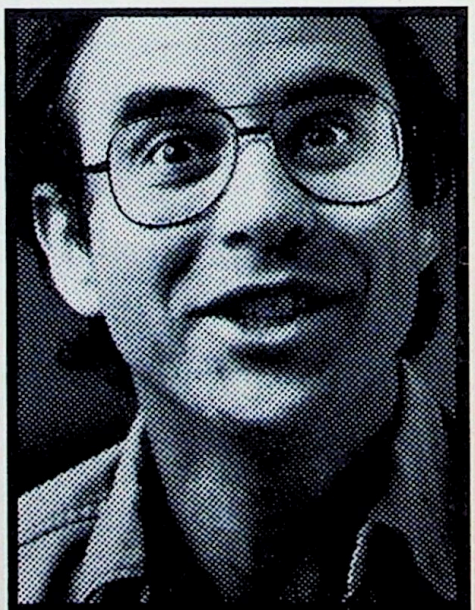
SZ: Yes, I think about that. I'm almost frightened to admit it. The funny thing is when I tell it to people I work around, they take me seriously. That's the most amazing thing to me. I don't take myself seriously, but they take me seriously. I'm working as an engineer on *Revenge of the Jedi* and then, for the first time, I'm going to be switching over to the production end.

MI: What will you be doing on production?

SZ: Well, it's all top secret. I'll be on location in England.

MI: Can't you be more specific than that?

SZ: No. This is a real "dangerous" one to talk about because the creatures we're coming up with have incredible

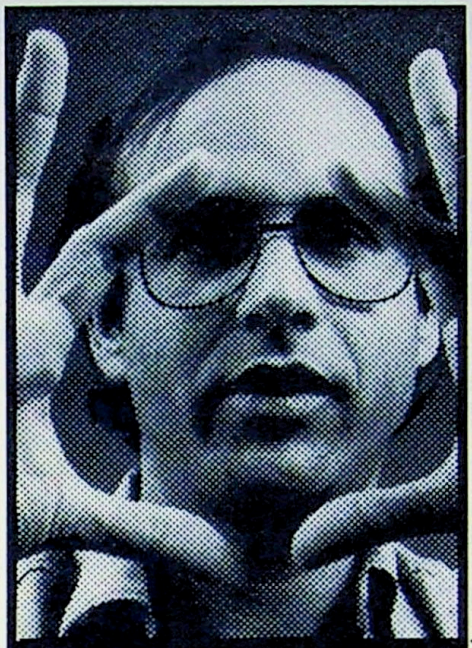


"I like the tension. I mean, most of my work is so boring that I enjoy the tension of being fired if I make a mistake."

marketing potential. I will just say they look very good. It's going to be worth the two-year wait.

MI: What about your contribution to *Empire Strikes Back*?

SZ: I coordinated machine development and built an optical printer, and



"I can do engineering, I know a little about electronics, some computer programming, and I'm a very good metal machinist. Plus, I can get people to do things—and that's what a lot of film is about."

I was very instrumental in getting the machine programmed, getting the parts ordered, solving electronic problems, electrical-mechanical problems.

MI: Did you have anything to do with the beasts in the film?

SZ: No. But after I quit *Empire*—

MI: You quit *Empire* also?

SZ: Of course. True to my record.

MI: So you quit *Star Wars* and you were hired back for *Empire*. You quit *Empire* and now you've been hired back for *Revenge of the Jedi*?

SZ: Well, I was actually hired back a year ago for *Dragonslayer*. They had to do this dragon creature, make it walk through a cave and fly. And since it was the star of the film, it had to look believable. Ordinary stop-motion animation has that jitteriness to it, that "strobing," and it's not very smooth. So, in a couple of minutes, Jon Berg and Phil Tippit and I came up with the idea of this machine which would essentially be an exoskeleton. We'd connect rods to a dragon puppet. And these rods would also be connected to motors, which were in turn controlled by a computer, and which would make the rods move and, therefore, make the puppet move.

MI: Before you came up with a dragon-mover idea, did they plan to use stop motion?

SZ: Yes. I think that was the plan. And, you know, the exciting thing about it is that we didn't know if the machine would work until pretty late along. But I like the tension. I mean, most of my work is so boring that I enjoy the tension of being fired if I make a mistake.

MI: You're kidding, of course.

SZ: No, I'm not. I mean, a lot of people want security and don't want to endanger anything. And because they're like that, they don't take real chances. For whatever reason, I always have this attitude that, "If they fire me, it's the best thing that could happen." And, because I have that attitude, I take bigger risks and they usually work out okay.

MI: It's curious that in the three *Star War* projects, you've done something different in each.

SZ: I guess that's one reason they hire me back. I'm sort of the "Mr. Wizard." I can do engineering, I know a little about electronics, some computer programming, and I'm a very good metal machinist. Plus, I can get people to do things—and that's what a lot of film is about.

MI: By your own admission, you've been pretty lucky getting work in the film industry. How would you counsel talented people out there who weren't born under horseshoes?

SZ: First off, you have to have something that's needed. To have a sincere desire, to say that you're trainable, to say that you have a Darth Vader costume and you've seen *Star Wars* 27 times—not only will that *not* get you into film, it'll get you off the phone. If you want to build models, you really have to *know* how to build models. Maybe you've worked in architectural companies, or whatever. Or if you have an interest in electronics, you have to *know* electronics, I mean, more than just plugging in the radio.

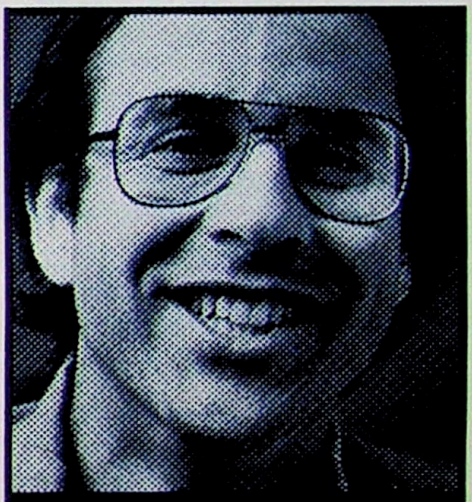
MI: What's going on at George Lucas's Industrial Light & Magic now? Where is he taking it?

SZ: Lucas is employing people to deal with optical compositing—take the film, transfer it to digital computer, operate on that as if it were just numbers, then transfer it back to film.

MI: Where does this lead in terms of what goes up on the screen?

SZ: It will mean more films to pull people away from their videocassettes and home projectors. Mind-blowing effects, but again, you can have the most wonderful effect, but if it isn't edited right, well . . . I mean, probably some of the most beautiful miniatures ever filmed were made for *1941* in the "Pacific Ocean Park" sequence. But the movie's such a turkey, who cares how good the effects are?

You know, I'm always asked two effects questions about *Star Wars*: How was the light sword done, and, in the scene where Han Solo jumps into hyperspace in the Millenium Falcon and all the stars streak out in straight lines—how was that done? Well, those are the simplest film effects to do. But people are amazed by it. And



"*Revenge of the Jedi* is 'dangerous' to talk about because the creatures we're coming up with have incredible marketing potential. I will just say that they look very good. It's going to be worth the two-year wait."

I've seen *Star Wars* a number of times and I think they're *really* amazed because the script and the editing are so wonderful. I've read interviews with other effects people and it sounds like they singlehandedly did all of this stuff, while all these other people stood around with their thumb up their ass. A film is a really big project, and I've done significant work, but I'm just *one* of the group. □

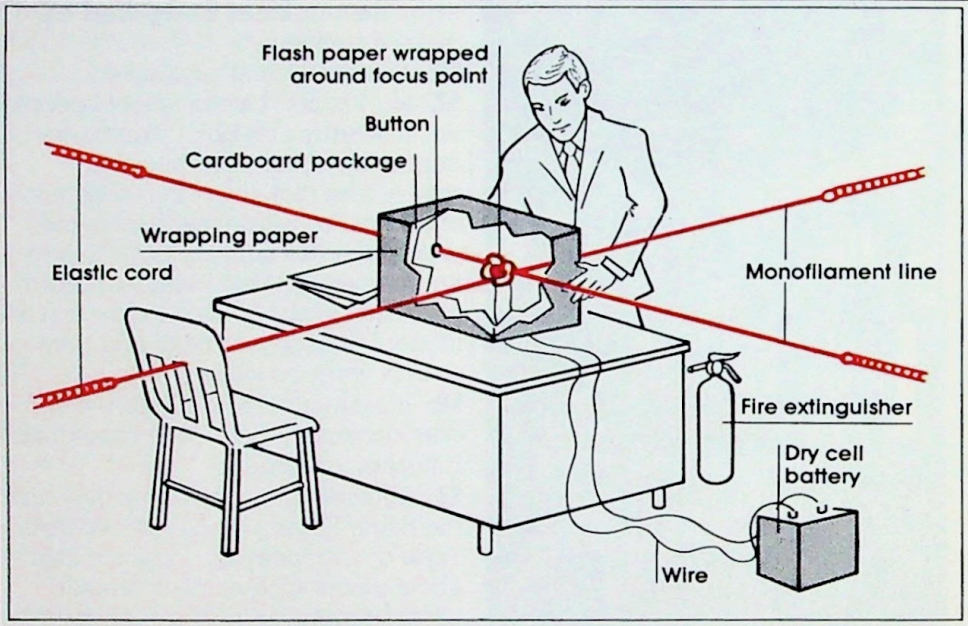
Mal Karman, author of The Foxbat Spiral, *wrote the screenplay for Part Two of* Lord of the Rings.

Explosions Without Explosives

Disguised as a delivery man, the ruthless assassin drops off the package wrapped in plain brown paper at a downtown office building. The box looks harmless enough, sitting on Stimpson's desk—but *we* know it's a bomb rigged to explode as soon as it's opened.

Stimpson enters his office; he appraises the package, examines it casually, then sits down to look at the rest of his morning mail. He pauses, an envelope half-opened in his hand. Then, unable to resist his curiosity any longer, he opens a drawer, takes out a pair of scissors, and cuts the package's twine binding. Suddenly, the box is ripped apart by a blast—fragments fly in all directions. The force of the explosion clears the desktop, hurls a chair across the room, and throws Stimpson against the wall of his office . . .

Shooting an explosive scene like this may seem very difficult, but it's literally a snap. The package is actually pulled apart by the tension of several carefully placed elastic cords. Other props, like the chair, are pulled away from the center of the blast by using the same trick. And, by adding convincing sound effects of an actual explosion, your audience will be convinced that poor Stimpson has finally met his maker.



How to simulate an exploding package? Four pieces of monofilament line are tied together inside a cardboard box and held in balance via elastic cords, off camera. When a dry cell battery ignites flash paper wrapped around the focus point of the lines, the sides of the box will fly outwards in a convincing manner.

How to Have a Blast

Our "bomb" prop is constructed from individual pieces of cardboard lightly fastened together with masking tape to form a small box. To facilitate rigging the trick, leave the bottom of the box open. Next, wrap the box to resemble a package, again leaving the bottom open. When that's finished, it's a good idea to slice the wrapping paper along the edges, using a razor blade or X-Acto knife, to make sure the paper won't prevent the package from easily tearing apart when it's "exploded." At the same time, it's wise to make a second prop package *without* the open bottom and slit slides. This prop will be used in shots preceding the explosion shot, especially close-ups.

The exploding prop is rigged in place on the set—in this case, on Stimpson's desk. Using a small nail or other sharp object, punch a small hole in each side of the package and run a length of monofilament fishing line through each hole, as shown in the diagram. Each of the four lines should remain long enough to extend from the prop to outside the set area (that is, off camera).

Inside the box, about a foot or so from the end of each line, tie a large button. This button (or other suitable item) will prevent the line from being simply pulled through the hole when the effect is triggered. Now tie the ends of the four lines together, keeping each button near—but not tight against—the inside surface of each side. For convenience, we'll call this knot the *focus*.

Next pull each line away from the focus and, just outside the camera's view, attach each line to a section of heavy elastic cord (available in fabric or hardware stores). This cord, in turn, is stretched back and attached to a suitable anchor point. This isn't as difficult as it sounds, unless you try to do the job all by yourself. Working at opposite sides, two people can position the lines—pulling more-or-less evenly—and attach them without much trouble. If a third person holds the prop in place while the others pull, the task is that much easier.

As the diagram indicates, the prop is now being pulled in four directions at once. But, since the tension on each line is the same, the prop stays put—the entire system is in balance. For our prop bomb to explode, all that's necessary now is to disrupt this balance. We'll do that by quickly destroying the focus.

Setting Up a Firing System

One of the simplest ways to destroy the focus is with *flash paper*, available from magic shops and theat-

rical supply companies. Flash paper ignites at a very low temperature and burns very rapidly, almost explosively, in a bright orange flash. Since it does burn so quickly, the risk of setting fire to surrounding areas is minimal. But—*caution is always in order.* Observe the same safety precautions you would use when working with fire or any pyrotechnic device and be sure to *have fire extinguishing equipment on hand.*

To set up an ignition system, wrap a 4×4-inch piece of flash paper around the knot inside the box and, if needed, secure it with a little tape. To ignite the flash paper on cue, we'll use a "Solar Ignitor" or similar device used to ignite model rockets, available from your local hobby shop.

Solar Ignitors are fired with a small dry cell battery. Connect the two wire leads extending from the ignitor to lengths of light gauge wire (such as bell wire) and run these wires from the prop to the battery. The wires should be kept as short as possible; since longer wires offer greater resistance to current flow, the ignitor may not fire immediately when the circuit is closed. However, since the timing of the sequence may largely be determined in editing, a slight hesitation of the explosion during shooting isn't always a major problem.

Fasten the ignitor to the flash paper, making sure the head of the ignitor is in good contact with the flash paper. Connect one of the wires from the ignitor to one of the two terminals on the battery. When it's time to explode the bomb, complete the circuit through the ignitor by holding the other wire against the other terminal. As a general rule, don't put a switch or push button in a firing circuit unless it's absolutely necessary—it's just one more thing that can go wrong.

Shooting the Actual Effect

Now everything is set to shoot our explosion scene. The prop is fully rigged and set to rip apart when the flash paper burns through the focus. As an added touch, other items surrounding the package on the desk—stacks of reports, desk paraphernalia, and so on—can be made to blast off the desk by attaching lines to them and fastening these lines along the main elasticized lines.

Because the sections of the prop will fly outward, pulled by their respective lines, in a more-or-less predictable direction, it's safe to place your actor (Stimpson) fairly close to the action. You've already shot the footage preceding the explosion, using the other prop, and you'll match Stimpson's position and action in this shot with the previous take to assure good continuity. Start shooting, with the actor repeating his action of cutting the package's twine, and cue an assistant to trigger the flash paper. In editing, you can tighten the shot to provide a continuous flow of action. No one will notice the lines running away from the bomb just before it rips the office apart.

This same technique can be applied to other types of situations. It's just as easy to place the "bomb" inside a desk or filing cabinet, provided you can make a breakaway prop. For larger explosions—an exploding ammunition dump, for instance—it may be necessary to use much heavier elastic cords, like the ones used to secure parcels onto motorcycles. It's also possible to have several different focus points all triggered simultaneously to create complex multiple explosions.

"If possible, use more than one camera to cover the explosion, since this will provide you with more points of view to use in editing."

Although the flash paper will create a small bright flash on film or videotape, you may want to add to this effect. In film, lightening a few frames with bleach works well. In video, you can often create a white flash by quickly turning the iris control switch to its widest setting to overexpose the shot. Depending on the equipment available, you can also superimpose a flash with another video camera, if you're working with a multiple camera setup, or you can add the flash through a special effects generator during post-production.

A few final words: If at all possible, use more than one camera to cover the explosion since this will provide you with more points of view to use in editing. Unless you decide to substitute a dummy for Stimpson, be sure to provide a cushion for him to land on (off camera) when he hurls himself away from the blast. And, once the scene is in the can, it's not a bad idea to take everyone out to dinner for a well-earned celebration. □

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BASICS

All About Lighting

The secret to shooting good films or videotapes often has more to do with lighting the subject than it does with using the camera. Fortunately, lighting is totally controllable if you just understand how it works. **By Charles Bensinger**

Lighting is a very important factor in the creation of a good videotape. No matter how good your video camera, poor lighting will produce a poor quality picture. This in turn will have an effect on the viewer.

Because the TV set shows only two dimensions, the third dimension—depth—must be created by your lighting. Like camera operation and audio recording, some people devote whole professional careers to the development and perfection of creative lighting skills. Lighting, perhaps more than anything else, determines mood and feeling; therefore, the proper lighting is a crucial component of any serious TV program or feature film.

The average home producer does not have the time, equipment, or need to take lighting quite so seriously. The main objective is to get a picture that is pleasing to the eye and has good detail. Black-and-white cameras are quite sensitive to light and are able to take good pictures even in the low lighting conditions found inside the home. Color cameras, however, are more critical and require special settings and filters for different lighting conditions.

Lighting Conditions

Probably the best lighting condition is a bright, cloudy day. Shadows are few and the lighting is fairly even. Bright sunlight tends to create tremendous contrast—shadows are too dark and areas that face the sun are too bright. Color cameras, though, love sunlight as the colors are rich and vivid. And the picture will be very sharp.

In nature, the sun is the primary light source. The sun's light is reflected and diffused many ways, providing secondary illumination. In trying to illuminate a subject artificially when indoors, the picture will look natural if the principles of natural lighting are used.

How to Light

The basic method of lighting is called the *3-point method*. A single, main source of light is generally located in front and above and to the right or left of the subject. This light is intended to roughly simulate the sun and is called a *key light*. Other smaller lights are then used to simulate secondary illumination or reflected light and are known as *fill lights*. A third, even smaller light, called a *back light* may be used to separate the subject from the background and really provide a 3-dimensional effect.

Professionals use special *quartz lights* which provide a great amount of light from a small lamp. Quartz lights come in all sizes and there are nice 3- and 4-light kits that can be purchased for $300 to $800. These kits include *diffusion screens* which allow you to control the amount of light given off by the lamp, stands to mount the lights on, and *barn doors* which make it possible to direct the light toward the subject.

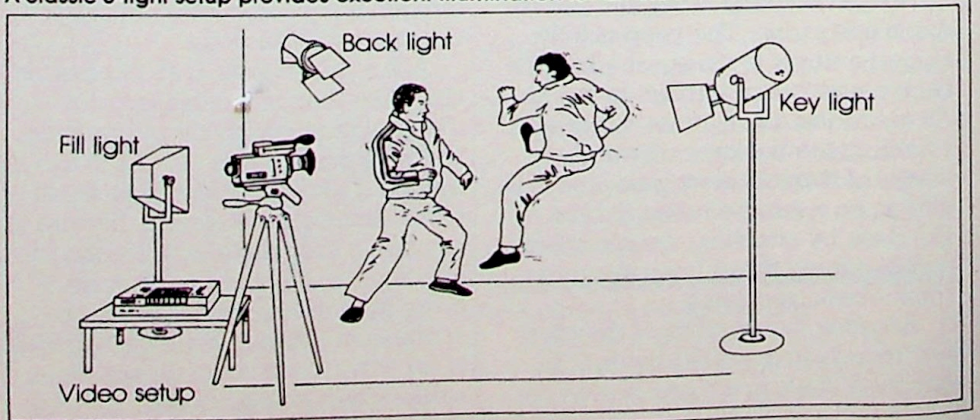
Certainly a full 3- or 4-light setup will enhance any production and really make it look professional if used properly. However, 3 quartz lights will draw at least 1,500 watts of power and may blow out your fuses unless you plug the lights into different circuits. You can do this by buying heavy duty AC extension cables and plugging some of the lights into wall plugs in separate rooms.

Black-and-white cameras do not really require such an elaborate lighting setup, but most color cameras do need more than the average household level of light if you want to have a crisp and colorful picture.

The least expensive setup includes 2 or 3 photographic lamps (250 or 500 watts), which cost about $20 apiece, and a few heavy-duty extension cords which can be purchased at most discount stores. Use these lights to illuminate your subject in addition to room lighting.

Also, you can minimize the need for artificial light by shooting in a bright, sunny, living room during the day and using the natural sunlight. You may have a problem mixing sunlight and artificial light if you have a color camera because of the mixed color temperature of daylight and indoor light. As we mentioned earlier, color cameras must be properly set

A classic 3-light setup provides excellent illumination for an indoor action scene.



for the dominant lighting conditions, and a mixture can confuse the camera. However, the Color Temperature Selector dial on the camera might be adequate. If not, use your White Balance control for precise adjustment.

The relationship of the brightest area to the darkest area is known as the *contrast ratio*. The idea of lighting *any* scene is to minimize this ratio. Thus, an evenly-lighted scene will provide good blacks, grays, and whites which will result in good detail in black and white and a good gradation of color.

If, on the other hand, you want to create dramatic and powerful scenes, then use contrasty lighting. A single bright light, for example, placed either high above or below the subject in a dark room will create a certain mood. A low-angle placement of light can create a feeling of mystery—whereas a bright, even illumination can suggest gaiety. Simply stated, light can make the subject credible or incredible, effective or ineffective.

"Lighting, perhaps more than anything else, determines mood and feeling; therefore, the proper lighting is a crucial component of any serious TV program or feature film."

The really nice thing about video is that you can experiment and see right on your TV set what your lighting looks like. Just keep moving the lights until you get the effect you want. What you see is what you will get.

One easy trick to use when shooting in relatively dark rooms, such as a girlfriend's or boyfriend's bedroom, is to replace the standard bulbs in the room lamps with bright photographic bulbs available at any photo store. This will preserve the natural lighting effect but will increase the overall level of light in the room. For best effect though, you might want to add one photographic key light also.

The Problem of Killer Backlighting

The two greatest lighting problems are insufficient light and severe backlighting. The former creates a poor gray overall picture. Severe backlighting causes the camera's automatic light adjusting system to black out the detail in the subject if the subject is in front of a brightly-illuminated area.

All video cameras contain built-in light sensing circuits that automatically cause the camera to adjust to the amount of light. However, the automatic circuit works best when the lighting is relatively uniform and constant. It usually has problems dealing with severe backlighting because it will only adjust to the brightest area of light in the scene. New auto-iris lenses, though, cope remarkably well with contrasty scenes. If you have an electronic viewfinder and can adjust the auto-iris lens manually or have a Back Light Control switch, perfect light exposure is possible even under difficult lighting circumstances.

Movement and Lighting

This is a real problem in motion photography. If only one area is well-lighted and the subject moves away slightly, he may find himself in darkness. Consequently, movement must be planned in advance, and lighting may have to be set up for several places along the subject's line of movement. Possibly several key lights and fill lights will be needed. The camera's compensating circuitry will be able to adjust somewhat to the differences in light, but it has limits. You can, of course, open or close the lens aperture to adjust the amount of light, also. If shooting outdoors, you will have to avoid shooting into dark shadows or heavily backlighted areas, such as a bright sky background which may cause a loss of detail in the picture or have a different color temperature shifting the color of your scene.

Again, depending on your camera and your circumstances, you may not have to be overly concerned about the lighting. Often a single household floodlight or photographic light aimed at the subject or on the ceiling above the subject will raise the room illumination sufficiently to provide reasonably good pictures. Lights, though, do create cables for people to trip over and hot lights can be very hazardous. So be careful. □

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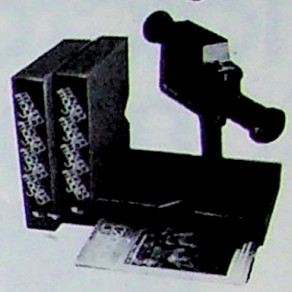

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TOOLS & TRICKS

Build Your Own Periscope Lens

To achieve fantastic points-of-view, weird angles, or unusual moving shots—here's a versatile device for your camera that can't miss. **By Jack Imes, Jr.**

Out of the submarine and into the studio, the unique perspective of a periscope lens has developed into an exciting tool for film and videomakers. We've seen it used with stunning results in major films like *Star Wars* and *The Black Hole*, and in video productions like the PBS series *Cosmos*—where, in one episode, a miniature model of the great Alexandria library looked like a full-scale set worth an Egyptian king's ransom!

The do-it-yourself periscope lens system presented here will provide you with equally sensational scenes by enabling your camera to gain access to inaccessible spots—both indoors and outdoors. A periscope lens can turn household terrariums and backyard sandboxes into dense Amazon jungles and arid Martian landscapes, or can give you an ant's-eye view of the universe. Best of all, you can build your own periscope photography system for about $30,000 *less* than the professional versions—in my case, for well under twenty bucks...

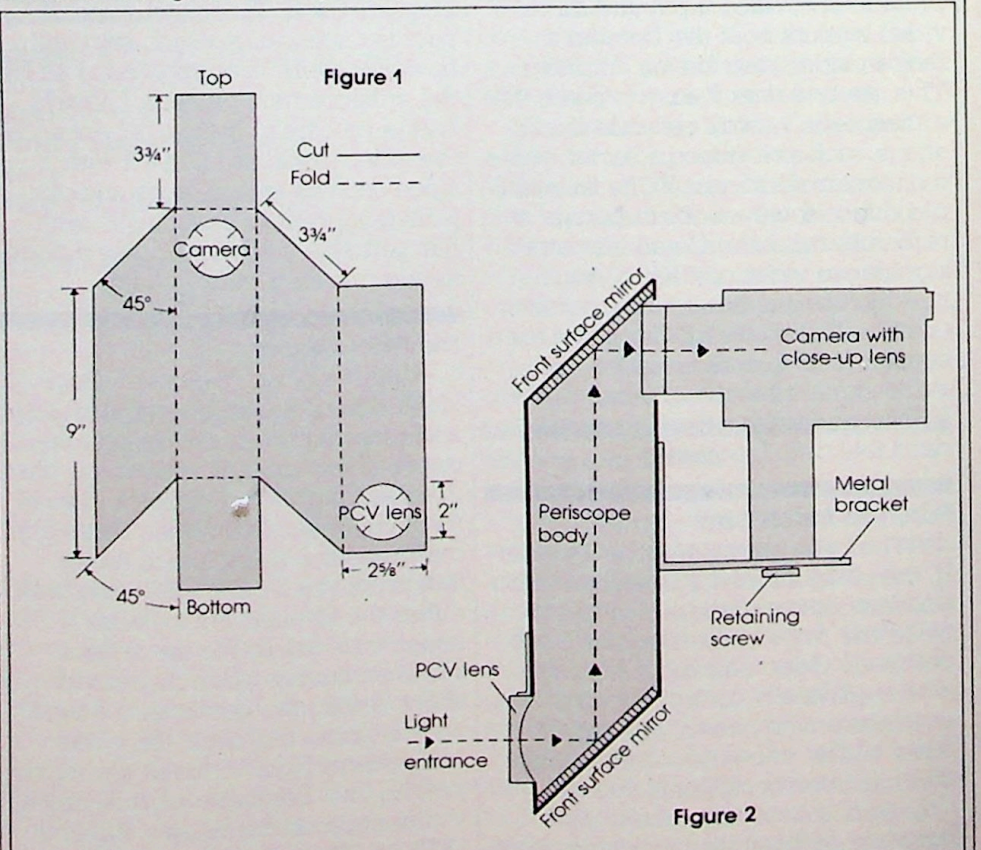
Building the Lens Fantastic

A professional periscope lens looks like a long vertical tube. At the top end is the camera, which points through a hole in the tube at a tilted mirror. The view, or scene, near the periscope's botton is reflected upwards, via another mirror, into the camera lens. My homemade periscope lens is based on the same general idea, but is greatly simplified and doesn't require optical engineering or fancy tools to build. Other than two special order items (which I'll discuss next), all you'll essentially need are scrap metal, cardboard, masking tape, glue, and a few common tools. See the "Supply List" for details.

As shown in the photograph and diagrams, my periscope lens device is boxlike in appearance. Inside each end are *front surface mirrors*, which have the reflective material on top of the glass, not beneath it as with common household mirrors. At the periscope's base is a special *plano-concave lens*, or PCV lens, which has one flat and one inward curving face. By placing the PCV lens so that its curving face points inside the periscope, it acts as a reducing lens and, instead of magnifying, it compresses anything viewed through it. Both the front surface mirrors and the PCV lens are available from optics supply houses like Edmund Scientific, 101 E. Gloucester Pike, Barrington, NJ 08007. The only other special item that you may need is a standard close-up

"A periscope lens can turn household terrariums and backyard sandboxes into dense Amazon jungles and arid Martian landscapes."

Figure 1: The basic periscope lens device is made from corrugated cardboard, following this pattern. Figure 2: Sideview of periscope system mounted onto camera. The dotted line shows how the light enters the periscope and is pitched upwards into the camera lens.



adaptor for your camera's lens.

Constructing the Periscope Body

Ordinary corrugated cardboard, smooth on both sides, and masking tape are the basic materials needed to create the periscope's body. Just follow the pattern shown in Figure 1, with the cardboard's ridges running vertically to make folding the sides easier. The exact size of the "Camera" hole is determined by the diameter of your camera lens (or close-up adaptor, when used). If a larger hole is needed, simply increase it to accommodate whatever the diameter of your lens happens to be. In some cases, it may be necessary to increase the thickness of the periscope's body, but this shouldn't present any major problem, except that you might need to change other measurements as well (such as the exact size of the front surface mirrors). The measurements presented here—9 inches long, 3¾ inches wide, and 2⅝ inches thick—work equally well with my Yashica LD-6 Super-8 camera and Hitachi color video camera.

"The do-it-yourself periscope lens system will enable your camera to gain access to inaccessible spots—both indoors and outdoors."

Once you've completed outlining the periscope pattern, take a utility or X-Acto knife and cut it out of the cardboard. Use your thumbnail to crease the dotted lines where the folds will be made, then carefully bend the cardboard into the proper shape. When finished, you should end up with a piece of cardboard that folds into a parallelogram, with two end flaps angled at 45 degrees. So far, so good.

Now open the cardboard up and lay it flat on your cutting surface once again. Proceed to cut out the area marked "Camera" to form the hole for your camera's lens. For an easy fit, make the hole a bit larger than your actual measurement, so the camera will slide effortlessly into place. Later, I'll explain the mounting bracket you'll build to keep the periscope firmly attached to your camera.

Next, assuming you've already ordered the PCV lens, cut out the area marked "PCV" to form the hole in which this special lens will be located. Do not use a PCV lens with a diameter any smaller than 54mm—roughly 2 inches—or you may get a vignette effect instead of a full-frame image. You may have to adjust the zoom lens of your camera to obtain adequate covering of the frame.

Adding the PCV Lens and Mirrors

The PCV lens is mounted over the "PCV" hole with the curved side of the lens facing inside the periscope's body. Instead of forcing the lens into place, make a simple support for it out of thin sheet metal, available at hobby stores. I cut a 4x5-inch piece of metal into a "T" shape with a pair of tinsnips. The crossbar measured about ⅜ inches wide and was long enough to bend around the circular edge of the PCV lens, forming a collar. Strips of strong masking tape kept the collar tightly fastened around the lens. The stem of the "T" bracket can be as long as 3 or 4 inches to provide an adequate mounting flange which will be fastened with masking tape to the periscope body, directly above the PCV hole (see Figure 2).

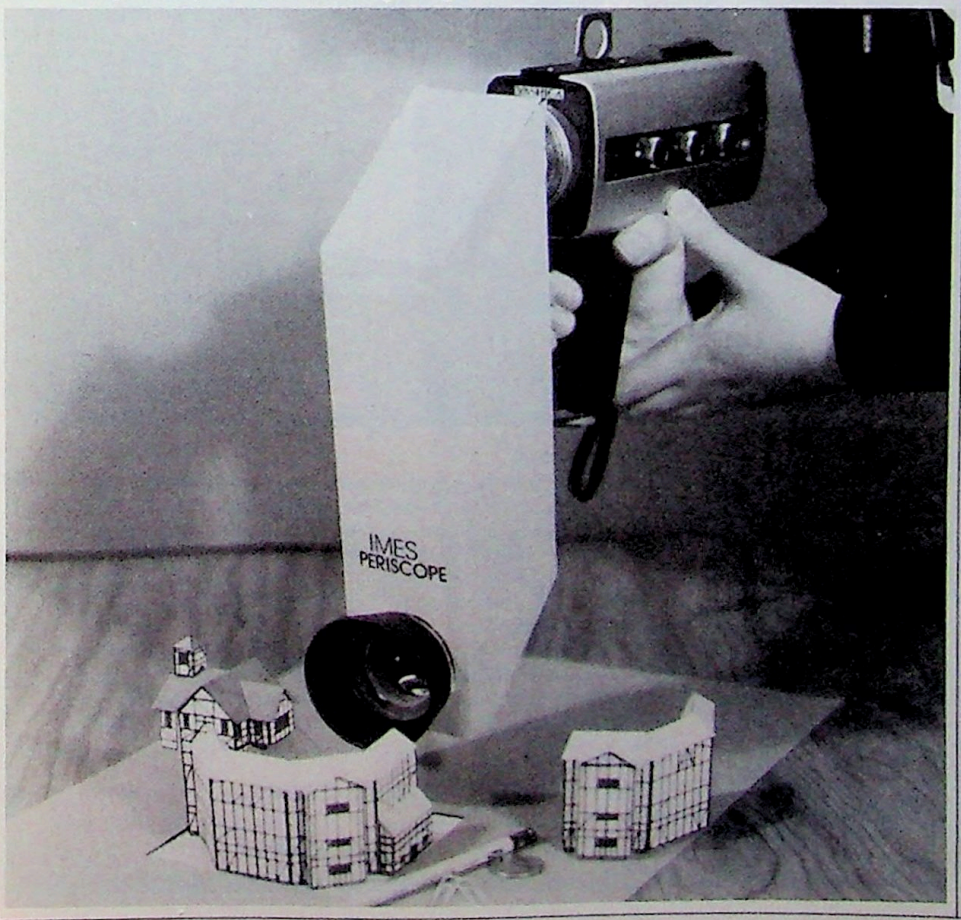
Supply List

One piece 15×25-inch corrugated cardboard
One piece 1×8-inch aluminum strip
One piece 4×5-inch thin sheet metal
One front surface mirror, 81×100mm (Edmund stock #41621)
One plano-concave lens, 54mm diameter, −56mm focal length (Edmund stock #94763)
One camera retaining screw, ¼-inch thread
Epoxy glue
Wide masking tape
Tools: X-Acto knife, tinsnips, scissors, electric drill, ruler
Optional: Close-up lens adaptor, construction paper to cover periscope body

As explained earlier, the periscope will have a front surface mirror on the inside of each flap at its top and bottom. To obtain the exact sizes needed, I ordered a thin 81x100mm front surface mirror from Edmund Scientific and had it cut into two identical pieces by a local glassworker. Since the reflective coating on front surface glass is extremely sensitive to scratches, the minimal charge of having it cut by a professional is worth it to avoid ruining the mirror. The exact dimensions of each mirror were a little less than the size of the flaps—2⅝×3¾ inches—to account for the thickness of each cardboard wall the mirrors must fit snugly inside of when the periscope is folded up.

Use Epoxy glue to attach each mirror to the inside of the end flaps. Handle the mirrors only by the edges, and

Here's the periscope lens in action, getting a close look at the Globe Theatre.



use a sheet of smooth paper for protection against finger smudges when pressing the glass against the Epoxy glue. After the glue is dry, the mirrors should be carefully cleaned with a soft brush or lintless cloth.

Once the PCV lens and the mirrors are firmly in place, the periscope body can be closed up along the folds and sealed on the outside with strong masking tape. Now all you need is a bracket for mounting the periscope to your camera.

Mounting and Testing the Periscope

The camera mounting bracket is nothing more than a 1×8-inch strip of aluminum bent into an "L" shape. One end of the metal strip is drilled with a ¼-inch hole to accommodate a standard camera retaining screw (available at camera stores). The exact location of this hole depends on the dimensions of your camera. The other end of the bracket is fastened to the periscope body with strong masking tape.

With camera mounted in place, look through the viewfinder and you should see the reflected image of the periscope's opposite end. The PCV lens will provide a round, seemingly wide-angle view which is what you'll get on film or videotape. However, if the camera's zoom lens cannot magnify the PCV scene to fill the viewfinder, then you will have to resort to an additional close-up lens adaptor. These accessory lenses are commonly found at photo stores for only a few dollars. They come in a variety of sizes and magnifications, usually marked +1, +2, +3 and so on. If you buy one, be sure the screw threads match your camera lens filter threads.

"Your finished periscope lens gadget may look odd, but it'll perform many of the same tricks used in Hollywood. Despite the lack of high-quality optics, this cardboard wonder can provide you with a funhouse of visual effects."

My Yashica Super-8 camera uses a +2 close-up lens, fitted to its zoom lens. Since film and video cameras come with a variety of lenses, it may take some experimentation to determine exactly what size close-up adaptor, if any, is needed to obtain full-frame magnification.

As an additional option, you may wish to dress up your periscope device by wrapping construction paper around the body, as I did, cutting out holes where necessary. I even added a small lens hood around the PCV lens, made from black paper.

Your finished periscope lens gadget may look odd, but it'll perform many of the same tricks used in Hollywood. Despite the lack of high-quality optics, this cardboard wonder can provide you with a funhouse of visual effects, since the end of the device can go where the bulkier camera usually can't go. Handle the camera in the usual way, but take some time to get accustomed to the periscopic view; remember, the PVC lens is displaced about a foot from the camera body. The main thing you'll want to avoid is crashing into the kitchen sink as you barnstorm through the house—or falling into the backyard swimming pool while shooting *Attack of the Man-Eating Frogs*. □

James Imes, Jr. is a freelance writer and filmmaker who specializes in unique visual effects.

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Continued from pg. 27

Video As a Tool

All these forays into uncharted technique are risky business. With the time that animation demands, a blown attempt can mean a major disaster. That's one reason why Colossal employs video as a pre-production tool. On Marv's 35mm Mitchell animation camera is a video 'tap'—actually a small television camera. The signal from the camera is recorded by a video animation deck, which isolates each 'frame' of video input to make a crude form of animation possible. Thanks to video technology, the feedback lag between conception and viewing the rushes to see what you've done is cut drastically; reels of film and valuable time are conserved.

Since Colossal's work for television is often distributed on videocassette, using video for the animation process itself would seem a natural alternative to film. However, the technology required to do high-quality video animation is prohibitively expensive. And even if Colossal were to drop a bundle on the latest, broadcast compatible, state-of-the-art video animation deck, its quality would be inferior to film. "Film is still the most subtle medium," Gary asserts. "Besides, much of our work relies on multiple passes on a single strip of celluloid," and certainly videotape lacks a comparable capability.

"Colossal's talented staff has employed just about every animation technique available, from pixillation to clay, plus some new methods they've researched and developed on their own."

Instead, they're more interested in putting the technology to use in motion study. Zach has built them a small computer graphics package that, so far, is capable of generating only simple geometric images. Two joysticks can rotate the figure displayed to any angle or size within the limits of the screen. A motion difficult to animate can be made easier to conceptualize. Or, the image can be traced with the aid of a video rotoscope. Drew remarks that at this stage the system is "just a toy. Frankly, we're not sure what we'll be able to do with it yet!"

If the past is any guide, they'll think of something. □

Calendar

JANUARY

United States Film and Video Festival. January 22–31 in Salt Lake City, Utah. Entry deadline for film and video has passed but you can still register for a series of workshops and screening of the winners. *Entry deadline* January 2. Contact: Katherine Janka, 1177 E. 2100 S., Salt Lake City, UT 94106. 801/487-8571.

Santa Cruz Video Festival. February 21–22 in Santa Cruz, California. *Entry deadline* January 22. Open to ¾- and ½-inch videocassette and open reel VHS. Entry fee: $5, plus return postage. Prizes. Festival theme is Community Reflections. Contact: Peter Brown, P.O. Box 1273, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. 408/475-8210.

Ann Arbor 8mm Film Festival. February 13–14 in Ann Arbor, Michigan. *Entry deadline* January 30. Open to Super-8, Single-8, Regular-8. Entry fee: $5. Cash awards and prizes. Contact: John Fialka/8mm Film Festival, P.O. Box 7592, Ann Arbor, MI 48107. 313/769-7781 or 313/761-5269.

American Film Festival Video Competition. Event will be held during June in New York. *Entry deadline* January 15. Entry fee varies. Time limit: 110 minutes. Awards presented. Contact: Nadine Covert, 43 W. 61st St., New York, NY 10023. 212/246-4533.

FEBRUARY

River City Film Festival. April 16–17 in Jacksonville, Florida. *Entry deadline* February 15. Open to Super-8, 16mm, and ¾-inch video. Entry fee varies. Time limit: 30 minutes. Cash awards. Contact: Jeff Driggers, River City Film Festival, Haydon Burns Library, 122 N. Ocean St., Jacksonville, FL 32202. 904/633-3748.

Moomba International Amateur Film Festival. February 20–March 7 in Australia. *Entry deadline* February 17. All 8mm entries restricted to amateurs. Open to all film and video formats. Entry fee: $2 (Australian). Time limit: 30 minutes. Awards presented. Contact: D.C. Wood, Festival Director, 12–14 Tannock St., North Balwyn, VIC, 3104 Australia.

Montreal International Super-8 Film Festival. February 25–27, in Quebec. *Entry deadline* February 1. Entry fee: $5. Cash awards. Contact: Richard Clark, 9155 St-Hubert St., Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2M 1Y8.

Dance & Mime Film and Videotape Festival. Event will take place during Dance Week in New York. *Entry deadline* February 15. Open to 16mm and ¾-inch video. Must be able to distribute film in U.S. Categories—dance, dance therapy, and mime. Contact: Susan Braun, 125 E. 23rd St., Rm. 401-A, New York, NY 10010. 212/598-9138.

Los Angeles International Film Exposition (FILMEX). March 17–April 2 in Los Angeles, California. *Entry deadline* for Super-8: February 1. Non-competitive. Contact: Gary Essert, 6525 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood, CA 90028. 213/469-9400.

Young People's Film and Video Festival. March 6 in Portland, Oregon. *Entry deadline* February 12. Must be a resident of Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, or Alaska. Amateur status only. Open to Super-8, 16mm, ¾- and ½-inch video. Contact: Howard Aaron, Northwest Film Study Center, 1219 S.W. Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205. 503/221-1156.

The American Film Institute (AFI) Center for Advanced Film Studies. Los Angeles, California. *Entry deadline for program:* February 1. The center offers advance training in all areas of film and television production. Open to advanced film and videomakers, and individuals without background in film with experience in related disciplines. Academic degree is not mandatory, but candidates are required to have basic education in arts and humanities. Contact: Center Admissions B, AFI, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027.

If your organization has news of an upcoming film or video festival, grants for film and videomakers, or any other film/video event that you wish announced in *Calendar*, let us know *at least three months in advance* of the event or deadline. Write: *Calendar*, MOVING IMAGE, 609 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94105.

MAKING MONEY/MICHAEL LAROCHELLE

The Profitable Art of Wedding Tapes

If you're looking for great human interest stories to videotape, stories that have tears and laughter, and a guaranteed happy ending, then look no further than your local church. Weddings offer all the above, plus the important benefit of fast becoming the most profitable venture in small format video.

Making a successful wedding videotape requires some careful planning and techniques, but it's a skill that can be readily learned by any experienced moviemaker. And, perhaps best of all, it's an activity that you can enter in a very gradual, step-by-step manner.

Through the medium of video, this newlywed couple can recapture the excitement of the most important day of their life.

Early Moves

For your first wedding, it would be wise to find a friend or relative who's getting married and offer to videotape his or her wedding as a gift or simply for the price of the blank tape. That way, you can feel free to experiment without the pressure of a paying customer hanging over your head. Not only will your friends be happy with their tape, but you'll very likely have a demo to show prospective clients.

Once you've gotten your feet wet with that first wedding, you'll know if it's the kind of videomaking that stimulates your creative side. If so, it's time to let the world know you exist. There's no vast market out there waiting to beat a path to your door. Videotaping weddings is a new service that has to develop its own market.

As with any business venture, it pays to advertise, but choose your media carefully. I find that the most effective ads are those I run in free distribution shoppers and flea market papers, which are usually weekly or monthly. Your ad will run for a longer time than in a large daily newspaper, and at a much cheaper rate. I've found that 90 percent of my business comes from the bride's side of the family, so advertise where they're likely to see you, for example, by distributing fliers at bridal shops and wedding caterers.

It's very important to present a quality image when first meeting potential clients. I have an advantage in that I manage a video store, and can show my demo tapes in a business environment. But you can make just as good an impression by meeting people at home, provided you can make your presentation uninterrupted and in attractive surroundings.

Making a Commitment

Once a couple has seen some of the tapes I've done so far, it usually takes little selling to convince them that their once-in-a-lifetime wedding should be preserved for years to come, to play back whenever they want on their own television. For a generation raised on TV, just the thought of being on the tube is often enough incentive; approximately half of my customers don't have VCRs at the time they hire me to make a wedding tape.

Once the decision is made to have a tape, I tell the couple exactly what I'll be doing, and I make sure I fulfill my promises. There's no surer way to make your business a short-lived one than to promise more than you can deliver. I tell my clients that this is not a network production, that there may be rough edits and missed action, but that the love that flows through their wedding will be preserved.

At this stage, I also ask for half of my fee as a deposit. My prices range from $150 to $350 for one completed videotape. The lower price covers a straight location shoot of the wedding with minimal editing, 45 minutes to an hour long. For the higher price, I'll make a mini-documentary, which might include interviews with bride and groom before the ceremony, footage of presents being opened, or anything else that adds flavor to the actual ceremony. I'll usually shoot about 1½ hours of tape, and edit down to about an hour, adding extra music and sound where appropriate. If clients want more than one copy of the videotape, then I charge them the cost of dubbing and the blank videotapes.

The Build-Up

Describe your planned sequence of shots to both the families and the clergyman, or whoever's going to be conducting the ceremony, so there'll be no distracting surprises for either you or them. This is also a good time to find out if there are any special family traditions that will take place, or anything the family specially wants on tape. In one wedding I did, the mother of the bride joined the ceremony to give the groom her wedding ring, a family heirloom, which he then placed on the bride's finger.

"For your first wedding, it would be wise to find a friend or relative who's getting married and offer to videotape his or her wedding as a gift."

If the wedding is to be in a church, verify with the minister that there are no restrictions on videotaping. If you think you'll want to bring in additional lighting, this must be okayed by the minister ahead of time also. I have some Acme-Lite Quartz with barndoors, but use them as sparingly as possible, so as not to ruin the mood of the ceremony. You don't want to turn the wedding into a Hollywood production; the less influence you have on the unfolding events, the better. Make yourself known to the official still photographer at this planning stage of the game also, so you don't find yourself competing with him or her for the best vantage points.

Tools of the Trade

Regarding the equipment you can use: any portable VCR will do the job. I see little advantage either format has over the other in image quality. Likewise there are many good color cameras on the market. As with any piece of equipment that's expected to pay for itself, buy the best you can afford. My own camera is a Sony DXC-1640, and I switch between a Sony ¾-inch deck, the VO-4800, and the ½-inch Toshiba V-5530. Whatever format I shoot in, I always take along one extra blank tape as a backup. My basic microphone is a shotgun model from Comprehensive Video that I place on the end of a fishpole; I rent other mikes as I need them.

An assistant comes in very handy. Perhaps you can persuade a friend to contribute his or her time in exchange for the experience, or even become your business partner. Video isn't as compact as Super-8, and it really helps to have someone run the recorder and monitor the audio while you concentrate on what's happening in front of the lens.

On the Big Day

A good starting place for your videotape is with establishing shots of the outside and inside of the church. Move on to the bride and her father, bridesmaids, the groom and his best man, as they wait to make their entrance before the guests. This is a good opportunity to include the parents of the couple greeting friends as they're seated.

Tape the whole ceremony, beginning with the various processions down the aisle. The exchange of vows is the most important element, and usually the most difficult to tape properly. Vows are often spoken in soft tones that are hard to hear, much less pick up with a microphone. This might be a time when you want to rent or borrow a wireless microphone, and if the minister doesn't object, have him wear it. The ideal place for the camera is on a tripod placed behind and slightly to the side of the minister.

After capturing the bride and groom walking down the steps of the church, try to arrive at the reception in time to get their arrival there. At the reception, you'll want to be sure to tape the cutting of the cake, the best man's toast, and the first dance. I add a special touch of my own, by going from table to table and asking family and friends to pass on a word of wisdom to the newlyweds.

Just before the couple leaves on their honeymoon, there's the traditional garter and bouquet throwing. I have yet to find a couple that wanted me to cover the honeymoon too, so this makes an excellent closing scene for the tape.

Videotaping weddings can quickly become a steady source of income, and the nature of the occasion ensures that you'll never be bored making them. I taped one ceremony where the best man, unknown to the groom, painted a message on the soles of his shoes. When the groom knelt at the altar, the sentiment was clear for all to read... HELP!□

Michael LaRochelle is owner of Star Video, one of the first production companies to specialize in wedding videotapes.

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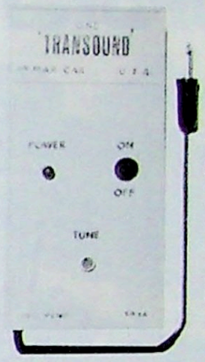

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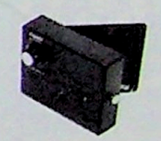

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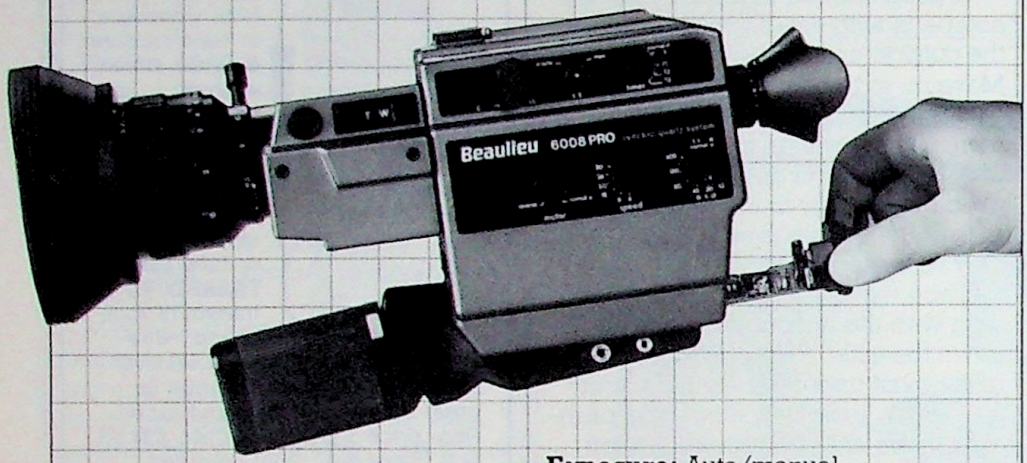
PRODUCT PROBE/DENNIS DUGGAN

Beaulieu 6008 Pro



The Facts in Brief

Model: Beaulieu 6008 Pro Super-8 silent camera.
Lens: Schneider f/1.4, 6–70mm macro zoom. Manual and variable speed power zoom.
Viewfinder: Reflex w/ground-glass focusing; LEDs for exposure, battery, and footage.
Speeds: 4, 9, 18, 24, 36, and 80 fps w/silent or sound cartridges; single-frame; time-lapse (3 speeds).
Exposure: Auto/manual w/memory lock.
Shutter: Guillotine mirror w/2 settings—normal and low light.
Special Features: PC/flash contact; optional synchro quartz slide; interchangeable lenses (C-mount and Beaulieu); 200-foot capability; fades; lap dissolve; remote control capability.
Suggested Retail Prices: camera body—$1,197; Schneider lens—$750; synchro quartz slide—$299.

CIRCLE INFOCARD 52

Following hot on the heels of Beaulieu's state-of-the-art sound camera, the 6008S, comes the equally elegant 6008 Pro—a silent camera with perfect picture and sound synchronization. Wait a second, you say, a silent camera for synchronized sound? The answer is simple: you insert into the camera a small module called a "synchro-quartz slide" that enables sound recorded on a separate tape deck to be in lip sync with the picture. In other words, the Beaulieu 6008 Pro is Super-8's first, *bona fide*, crystal sync camera—a machine that's taking Super-8 filmmaking into a new world of super professionalism.

Sounds Professional

Double system filmmaking is accomplished by using two pieces of equipment: a camera and a tape recorder. In one setup, a cable connects the camera's flash/sync output to the tape recorder's sync input to maintain picture and sound synchronization. The other way to go, preferred by many professionals for its added flexibility, is called *crystal sync control*, which requires a crystal motor control in the camera and a quartz crystal oscillator in the tape recorder—but no umbilical cord.

"Even though the Beaulieu Pro is a silent camera, in price and design, hiss the villain who suggests it's only good for making silent movies."

With crystal sync, cinematography can be carried out freely from the best vantage point with no thought to the sound. The sound person picks the most desirable spot to record from, independent of the camera. And, best of all, there is no cable or other physical connection between the two. Great angles, tight miking, no umbilical, and yet it's all in exact lip-sync with the accuracy of a quartz watch. It's hard to top. Crystal recorders of superior quality have been around for years but crystal controls for Super-8 cameras required special installations that could void the manufacturer's warranty. Rumor had it that these expensive modifications could cause motors to burn out quickly so most filmmakers were reluctant to take the chance. Hence, the luxurious elegance of crystal never found a place in the world of Super-8. Until now that is.

"Beaulieu has built the Pro to accept sound as well as silent cartridges—and that includes the 200-footer."

A Franco-American Love Story

I've owned, and used, an XLR-24 tape recorder (from Cinema Sync Systems) for several years now, and regard it as one of the finest pieces of filmmaking equipment I own. When I set the Beaulieu 6008 Pro down next to my XLR-24, I was reminded of Claude Lelouch's *And Now My Love*, a beautiful French film of love and fate. In the course of the film, the male and female leads never meet, although we soon realize that neither of them are likely to find happiness in a relationship unless they should chance to meet each other. Finally, we see them separately boarding the same plane, and in a final long shot, they sit next to each other as the movie ends. Or begins.

Crystal sync is one of the main features of my XLR-24, but I was never able to take advantage of it until the Beaulieu Pro arrived. Like Lelouch's lovers they were made for each other. I popped the (optional) crystal module into the Beaulieu and filmed short takes, average takes, and even a single shot that lasted the entire length of a cartridge. The synchronization between the two remained accurate throughout. Together, they're a great pair, delivering the highest possible quality of both picture and sound. Effortlessly. So even though the Beaulieu Pro is a silent camera, in price and design, hiss the villain who

suggests it's only good for making silent movies.

Shhh! Filmmaker at Work

Many people use movie cameras in a very serious way but with no need to record the sound while they film. Animators, private detectives, sports and nature cinematographers, and abstract film artists are but a few of the filmmakers that fit into this category. Just like the Beaulieu 6008S, the 6008 Pro offers lots of exciting features for the cameraperson—interchangeable lenses, ground-glass focusing, total exposure control, and a variable shutter, with both XL and normal modes.

The lens offered with the camera is a sharp Schneider f/1.4, 6–70mm zoom with good color rendition and macro focusing. There's a manual lock to prevent the lens from zooming out past 40mm in a low existing light situation, or when you're handholding the camera. One reason for this is that the lens is f/1.4 only up to 40mm, and beyond that slows down in its light gathering ability; another reason is that it's extremely difficult to get steady handheld shots beyond 40mm. But in ample lighting situations and with a tripod, the variable speed, motorized zoom can easily traverse the 11:1 range in from 3 to 10 seconds. When operated manually though, the zoom didn't move too smoothly until I added on an EWA zoom lever.

"Just like the Beaulieu 6008S, the 6008 Pro offers lots of exciting features for the cameraperson—interchangeable lenses, ground-glass focusing, total exposure control, and a variable shutter."

Beaulieu cameras use a different type of shutter from other Super-8 cameras. It's a mirror set at a 45-degree angle with a guillotine action that allows all incoming light to go to the film when the shutter is opened. When it's closed, all the light goes to the viewfinder. This allows interchangeable lenses to be used, and also lets you see the effect of the selected aperture on the depth of field in a particular scene. Most 16mm and 35mm cameras employ a mirror shutter.

There's two settings for the shutter—normal and low light. The respective speeds are 1/72 and 1/40 second at 18 fps, and 1/96 and 1/60 second at 24 fps. But don't use the XL feature when the light is bright, or when you want to pan and capture fast movement without creating a blur.

An interesting difference between the 6008S and the 6008 Pro is slow motion speed. The 6008S has speeds of 4, 9, 18, 24, 36, and 56 fps; the Pro gives you the option of shooting at an incredible 80 fps, instead of 56 fps. Now, that's slow motion! And you can do it for a whole cartridge if you like, rather than just for a few seconds while you hold a button depressed.

"The Beaulieu 6008 Pro is the world's first, *bona fide*, Super-8, crystal sync camera."

No matter what your shooting style, most films are finally shown with some kind of sound track. With this in mind, Beaulieu has built the Pro to accept sound as well as silent cartridges—and that includes the 200-footer. Music, voice, and effects tracks can be easily added onto the processed film with a projector.

Is the Pro the Way to Go?

Given a choice between the Beaulieu 6008 Pro and the 6008S, which would you choose? For me the answer isn't so simple. Since most of my films are narrative, and you'd be hard pressed to hear any significant difference in the sound quality of human speech between a Nagra and the built-in sound of the 6008S, I'd probably opt for the sound model. I like the convenience and the ability to see *and hear* the rushes right away. Of course, I would use the flash/sync contact and a cable to record in double system at the same time. But if I filmed concerts, dance, or shows with music, where the sound track should be good enough to release as a record album, I'd want to use my XLR-24 freely, without a cable, along with the speed control and accuracy of the Beaulieu 6008 Pro. In either case, though, I'd be confident that my efforts were being supported by equipment built with the highest standards of quality in mind. If you want to blow your films up to larger formats or transfer to broadcast quality video, you could regard either Beaulieu 6008 as a pro. For more information about Beaulieu Super-8 products, contact Otto Hervic/Beaulieu, 4907 Valjean Ave., Encino, CA 91436. □

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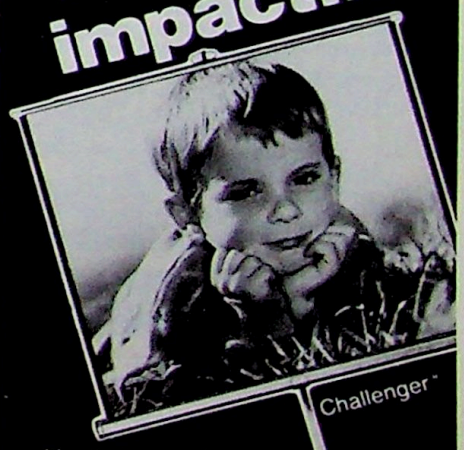

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Kodak Ektachrome 160 Sound Movie Film (ELA 594) $7.39, with processing $8.89. Kodak mailers PK-59 for Super-8, 50' cartridges $2.55. Dec. special. FILMLAB, 521 No. 7th St., Allentown, PA 18102.

Ektachrome 160 Super-8mm, $5. Add 50¢ per cartridge for postage. STAR FILM CO., 442 W. 45th St., New York, NY 10036.

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Super-8 Precision Sprockets, rollers, miscellaneous mechanical movements. Write for list & prices. CJM, POB 3148, Reston, VA 22090.

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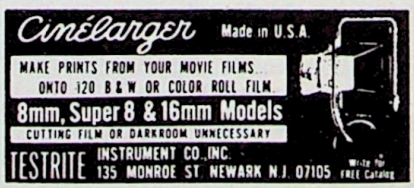
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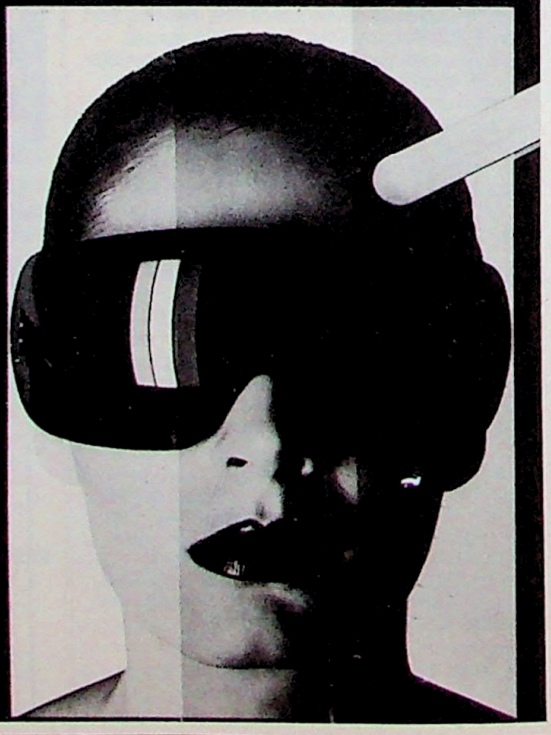

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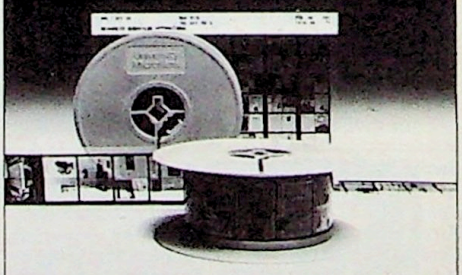

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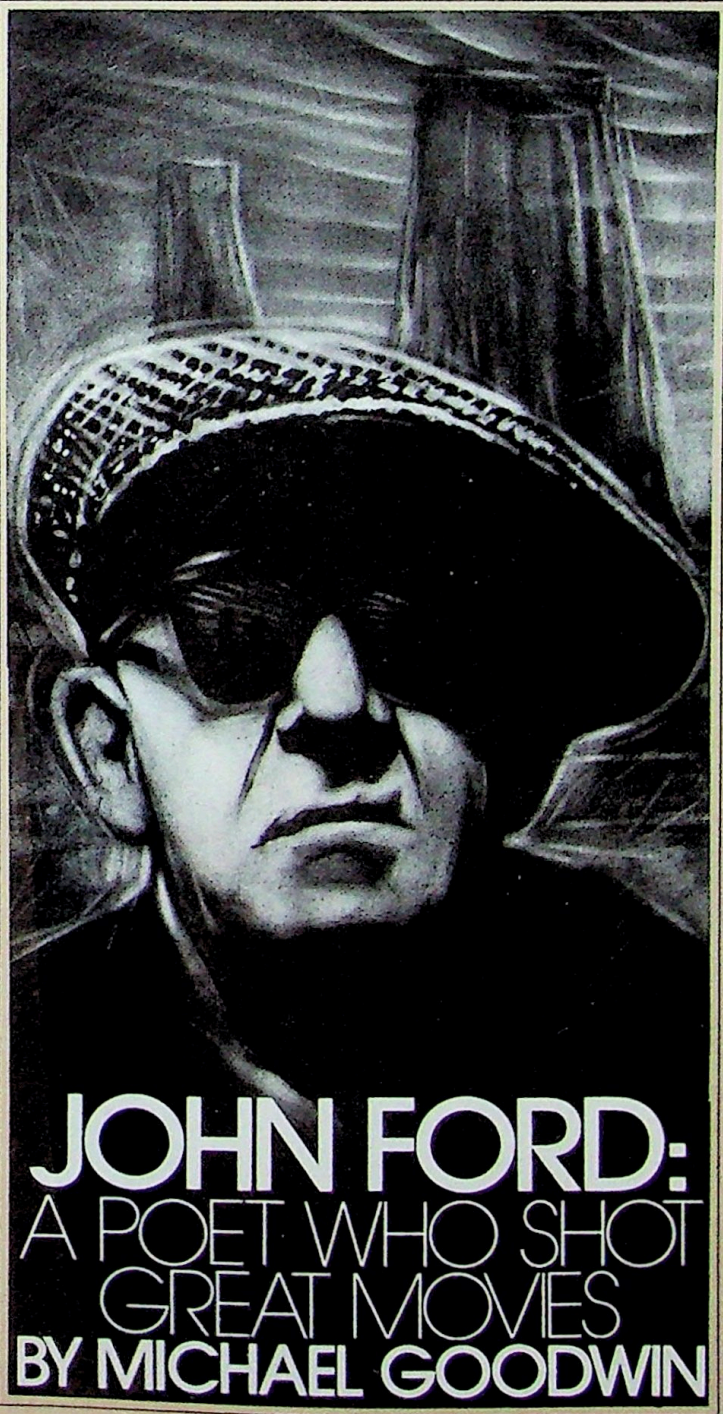


John Ford (1895–1973) is America's foremost film poet. He made no fewer than 111 films in his long and successful career—comedies, westerns, costume dramas, art films, war movies—starting with silent two-reelers in 1915 and ending with *Seven Women* in 1966. He worked with the greatest film actors of his time—Henry Fonda, James Stewart, Anne Bancroft, Richard Widmark, Lee Marvin, Spencer Tracy, Edward G. Robinson and, of course, John Wayne—and in almost every case Ford gave them their most memorable roles. His stock company of supporting actors was equally impressive, including John Carradine, Ward Bond, Mildred Natwick, Barry Fitzgerald, Ben Johnson, Victor McLaglen, Jane Darwell and many, many more—and again, the roles that made them immortal were Fordian roles. In addition, Ford "discovered" Monument Valley in Utah, and made it his own with a series of magnificent westerns that mark that genre's finest moments.

A tense scene in *Fort Apache*, perhaps the best of John Ford's "Cavalry Trilogy."

For many years, Ford's prestigious, "class" projects (*The Informer, The Long Voyage Home, The Grapes of Wrath, How Green Was My Valley*) were considered his main claims to fame, but as critical perceptions of his career have evolved it has become apparent that his greatest work, his highest poetry, can be found in the seemingly-effortless, deeply-felt westerns and military service films where he explored his life-long themes of sacrifice, victory-in-defeat, and the importance of ritual and shared social tradition. With only ten Ford films available on

Before Jeffrey Hunter joins John Wayne in a hunt to find his kidnapped daughter, he bids his wife farewell in *The Searchers*.

videotape, I would have expected them to be drawn mostly from the prestigious "classics"; surprisingly, and happily, six of the ten are westerns—and great westerns at that. Probably, this is due as much to John Wayne's presence in these films as to any other factor. The Duke is still big box-office—largely thanks to Ford, who gave Wayne his first decent role in *Stagecoach* (1939), and continued to cast him in pictures that gave him a chance to flex his muscles as an actor. It's singularly appropriate that Ford's faith in Wayne as an important American actor should result, today, in some of Ford's best films remaining easily accessible in videotape format.

Brilliant Throwaways

The poetry of John Ford is subtle, and less easily analyzed than Hitchcock's flashy editing techniques or Hawks' preoccupation with male-bonding and group dynamics. Ford works almost by misdirection; often the important moments in his films are asides, or throwaway comedy routines, or scenes that have little to do with advancing the main plot. In order to understand how Ford provides the astonishing depth of feeling that informs his best work, we have to pay close attention to the moment-by-moment texture of the films. In the space available here, all I can do is point out a few of the more obvious set-pieces. Serious students will find themselves running the films over and over, and finding more each time.

Kate Hepburn faces death for her defiance of the Queen of England in *Mary of Scotland*.

The Informer (1935) was one of Ford's earliest critical successes. It's an arty, expressionist film, all fog and dramatic lighting, set in Dublin in 1922, starring Victor McLaglen as Gypo Nolan, a big, childlike Irishman who gets drunk and informs on his pal, IRA revolutionary Frankie McPhillip. The film is one of the first manifestations of Ford's life-long preoccupation with his Irish roots and Catholic religion; in fact, he turns the story into a religious parable of sin and redemption, with McPhillip as Christ, Nolan as Judas, and a last scene set in a church as McPhillip's mother forgives the dying Nolan. *The Informer* is a masterpiece of atmosphere, and McLaglen's performance is moving and believable; it also displays a number of classic "Fordian" elements—drinking scenes, fights, and a traditional Irish funeral. Nonetheless, for all its striking compositions and memorable sequences (like the one in which the British policeman shows his contempt for Gypo by pushing his blood money across a desk to him with a stick), *The Informer* seems relatively self-conscious and heavy-handed. A brutally compressed sound track, in which loud hiss erupts whenever there's a moment of silence, does not help matters.

"*Mogambo* stars Clark Gable, Ava Gardner, and Grace Kelly in a remake of *Red Dust* revolving around a bad girl, a good girl and a sexy white hunter on steamy safari in Africa. . . . In many ways, *Mogambo*, with its tough, wisecracking heroine intruding on a male group and winning its respect, feels far more like a Howard Hawks film than a Fordian one."

In *The Quiet Man*, John Wayne is an Irish-American who falls in love with the hot-tempered Maureen O'Hara.

Mary of Scotland (1936) is a decidedly minor work—a talky adaptation of Maxwell Anderson's stageplay about Mary Stuart and her rivalry with Queen Elizabeth. Katherine Hepburn's Mary is one of her weaker performances. Fredric March is charming as Bothwell, her suitor, and John Carradine has a good time as an Italian courtier with a lute. But it's a dull, impersonal film, and if you missed the titles you'd never guess that John Ford had directed. One suspects that Ford was initially attracted by Mary's unfashionable Catholicism, only to discover that he liked neither Hepburn nor the stiff stageplay. Nonetheless, Fordian students will recognize the sequence in which Mary melts into a happy fog as a Scot chorus serenades her as a prototype for many serenades in many Ford films to follow.

Monument Valley Saga

The Cavalry Trilogy—*Fort Apache, She Wore a*

Yellow Ribbon, Rio Grande (1948–1950)—stands as close to the center of Ford's greatness as anything he ever did. Of course the Trilogy was never intended to be any such thing. It is merely three impeccable westerns about the U.S. Cavalry during the Indian Wars, shot in Monument Valley, starring many of the same actors (Wayne, Bond, McLaglen, *et al*) and based on stories by James Warner Bellah. Recurring character names suggest a continuous chronology in the films that doesn't quite add up; nonetheless, the films are occasionally shown as a unified work, and if you start with *Apache* and follow it with *Rio Grande* and *Yellow Ribbon* (and don't look too closely) the story line almost makes sense.

" 'I should like to do a tragedy,' said John Ford as he began work on *The Searchers*, 'the most serious in the world, that turned into the ridiculous.' *The Searchers* would be everything he hoped for—and the surest candidate of all his films for immortality."

These are more than just great action films; Ford invites us to join the men and women of the 7th Cavalry, to share their time and place in history, to dance with them, drink with them, die with them. The great scenes in the Trilogy are ceremonial (dances, funerals, drinking bouts), or deeply personal (Wayne's graveside talks with his dead wife). Ford makes us see the adventure through the eyes of the men and women who lived it. One of the greatest moments in *Fort Apache*, for instance, occurs when the troop rides out of the fort on what we suspect will be a suicidal mission. The men assemble to the music of bugle calls, and ride past the camera in a series of heroic, low-angle shots, flags flying under a spectacular sky full of massive cloud formations, singing "The Girl I Left Behind Me." It's a fine sequence to begin with, but Ford gives it an unforgettable poignance by starting it with a beautifully composed, close-up, low-angle shot of three women watching wordlessly as their men ride away. He returns to the shot halfway through the sequence, so we don't forget the women, and then, after he's followed the troop into the harsh desert of Monument Valley, he comes back to it again. "I can't see him," whispers one of the women. "All I can see are the flags."

Fort Apache is (marginally) the best of the three films, but who can forget the stunning Technicolor photography that makes *Yellow Ribbon* a virtual homage to Frederick Remington, or its spectacular thunderstorm (no studio trickery, either; the storm came up and Ford went out and shot in it), or the deep sadness of *Rio Grande* as Food explores the high personal price that every soldier must pay, or the look of horror on McLaglen's face when the Colonel tells him to destroy two barrels of rotgut whiskey? (He does so by trying to drink it, of course.)

If one had to pick John Ford's best western (a ridiculous prospect, of course), one could make worse choices than *Wagonmaster* (1950). This sublimely simple tale of a Mormon wagon train heading west through hostile country is one of the best "road movies" ever made. It also stars three of Ford's finest character actors—Ben Johnson and Harry Carey Jr. (as high-spirited horse traders who agree to guide the train) and Ward Bond (as Elder Wiggs, an earthy Mormon leader). The basic premise—a group of outcasts overcoming a series of insurmountable obstacles in search of "a pretty valley" in which to settle—is quite obviously intended to suggest the whole American adventure, but it's realized without the slightest hint of pretension. As in the Cavalry Trilogy, Ford humanizes the heroic story with plenty of ritual ceremonies and broad comedy: rollicking square dances in the middle of the desert, Elder Wiggs' never-ending struggle to keep from cursing, and a beautiful, recurring, low-angle shot of Jane Darwell blowing a horn to start the wagons rolling again. But the central image, seen in shot after unforgettable shot, is that line of wagons rolling up steep hills, past towering buttes, through rivers, over sand and rock and dirt—symbolizing the unstoppable, inevitable western march of *all* the American settlers.

"One of the greatest moments in *Fort Apache* occurs when the troop rides out of the fort on what we suspect will be a suicidal mission. The men assemble to the music of bugle calls, and ride past the camera in a series of heroic, low-angle shots, flags flying under a spectacular sky full of massive cloud formations, singing 'The Girl I Left Behind Me.' It's a fine sequence to begin with, but Ford gives it an unforgettable poignance by starting it with a beautifully composed, close-up, low-angle shot of three women watching wordlessly as their men ride away."

"With only ten Ford films available on videotape, I would have expected them to be drawn mostly from the prestigious 'classics;' surprisingly, and happily, six of the ten are westerns—and great westerns at that. Probably, this is due as much to John Wayne's presence in these films as to any other factor."

A Tale of Ireland

The Quiet Man (1952), Ford's loving portrait of Ireland as Heaven On Earth, begins like a folktale with Ward Bond's voice-over narration—and Ford maintains the fairytale atmosphere as he spins a magical yarn about an Irish-American (Wayne) who returns to the Emerald Isle looking for his roots, falls in love with a hot-tempered colleen (Maureen O'Hara), gets in dutch with her big brother (Victor McLaglen) and, finally, learns the value (and price) of tradition. *The Quiet Man* features some of the most glowing color photography ever committed to Technicolor stock, and includes some of Ford's funniest scenes and loveliest dialogue. There's Barry Fitzgerald, a hard-drinking matchmaker (and, like all Ford's Irish good guys, an IRA man), slipping off to the pub through a gale-force wind, with, "Well, it's a nice, soft night, so I think I'll join my comrades and talk a little treason." There's a dreamlike love scene on an open hillside at dusk, with O'Hara's hair and clothing blowing wildly in the wind. And there's an epic, nine-minute fistfight between Wayne and McLaglen, with an intermission for beers, cheered on by every single person in town (plus the inhabitants of the *adjoining* town, who come over by bus to watch the bout). Wayne is gentle and charming; O'Hara is deliciously feisty and infinitely desirable; Ward Bond is crusty and sweet as Father Lonergan; and Barry Fitzgerald gives one of the best performances of his career as the ever-thirsty Michaeleen Og Flynn. *The Quiet Man* is a rare vision of Ford's world in perfect balance.

Victor McLaglen in *The Informer*, an expressionistic film that was one of Ford's earliest critical successes.

Mogambo (1953) stars Clark Gable, Ava Gardner and Grace Kelly in a remake of *Red Dust* revolving around a bad girl, a good girl and a sexy white hunter on steamy safari in Africa. *Mogambo* starts well with Ava Gardner's smart, sensual playgirl a standout, but it soon grows tedious and predictable as the plot thickens—and at no point does Ford seem to get even minimally involved. In many ways, *Mogambo*, with its tough, wisecracking heroine intruding on a male group and winning its respect, feels far more like a Howard Hawks film than a Fordian one—and I'll bet money it served as a model for Hawks' *Hatari* (a similar, but far better film), made almost ten years later.

Immortal Western

"I should like to do a tragedy," said John Ford as he began work on *The Searchers* (1956), "the most serious in the world, that turned into the ridiculous." *The Searchers* would be everything Ford hoped for—and the surest candidate of all his films for immortality. John Wayne stars as Ethan Edwards, a bitter, lonely man who embarks on a five-year odyssey across the frontier to find, and rescue, his niece, who's been captured by Commanches. As his obsessive hatred of Indians grows out of control, we begin to suspect that he may actually kill his niece instead of rescuing her.

The Searchers is an anguished film, with a terrifying subcurrent of madness that threatens to overwhelm its protagonist. It is also a work of flawless, sure-handed filmmaking, a distillation of everything Ford had learned in 40 years of directing. The relentless, slow-building tension of the sequence in which the Indians massacre the family of Ethan's brother Aaron and steal the girl is only one example. It begins with birds flying at the camera out of an ominous, red, desert sunset. A dog barks uneasily. Inside the cabin, Aaron gets his gun. "Think I'll see if I can't pick off a couple of sage hens before supper," he says, stepping

quietly outside. His daughter Lucy starts to light a lantern, but her mother stops her. "Lucy, we don't need a lamp yet, let's just enjoy the dusk." Outside Aaron hears ominous hoots and whistles. Inside, his wife tells her young son, "Close the shutters, Ben, like a good boy," and starts barring windows herself as Aaron runs back into the house, looking worried. In a close shot, Aaron bars the door. So far, the camera has not moved very much, but now it pans suddenly from Aaron to reveal Lucy lighting the lantern; the unexpected pan works to increase the suspense. "Lucy!" snaps her mother, rushing into the shot and blowing out the light. Now the camera cuts into a close-up of Lucy, and zooms into an even tighter shot as her face fills with horror, and she screams, understanding at last what everyone has been afraid to say. Ford doesn't need to show the massacre; by letting us experience the terror of the family he makes us imagine a massacre far more awful than anything he could show.

Eloquent Parable

The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance (1962) is one of Ford's most complicated, ambivalent, thoughtful pictures, starring James Stewart as a young frontier lawyer fighting for statehood and civilization, Lee Marvin as Liberty Valance, a blackhearted killer who wants to keep the range open and the law far away, and John Wayne as a noble, anarchic gunman who helps Stewart against his better judgment—and loses both his girl and his world as a reward. *Liberty Valance* is a deeply-felt parable, full of eloquent silences that speak volumes of regret for the closing of the frontier, and the ravages that time and death work on idealism, even as Ford celebrates the coming of civilization. The supporting cast is one of Ford's best, featuring Andy Devine as a useless marshall with a giant appetite, Woody Strode as Wayne's implacable right-hand man, and Edmund O'Brien as Dutton Peabody, crusading newspaperman and town drunk. As in all his best films, Ford gooses the action along with generous helpings of comedy—most typically in the scene where delegates to the statehood convention are being elected in the barroom. When Peabody tries to get a drink, Wayne tells him, "The bar is closed, Mr. Editor. And no exceptions."

"No exceptions for the working press?" asks Peabody in horror. "That's carrying democracy too far. A small beer."

"The bar is closed," says Wayne implacably.

"Just a *beer*," pleads Peabody desperately. "A *beer's* not drinking!"

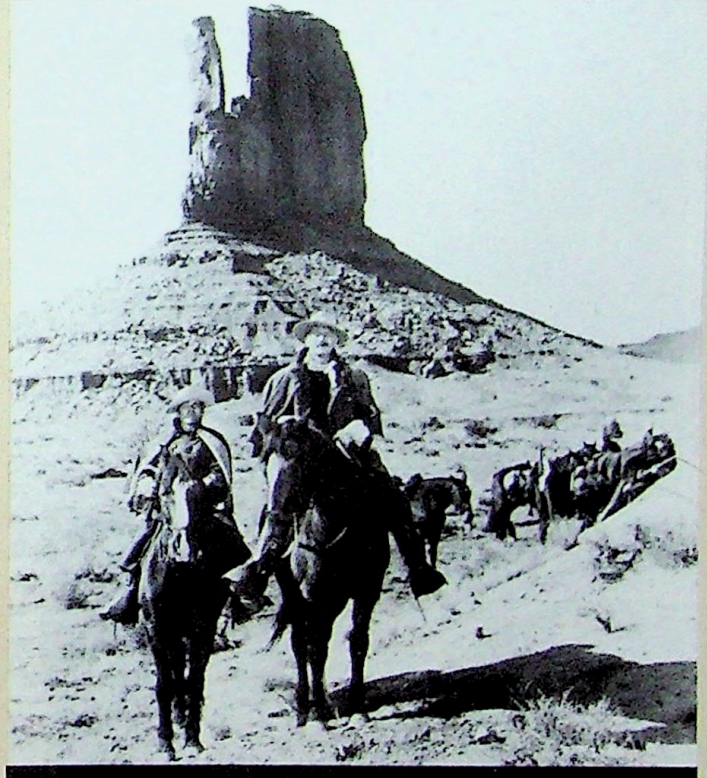
Despite Peabody's weakness for alcohol, he is courageous enough to stand up to Liberty Valance—and one of the strongest scenes in the film is the one where Valance and his thugs destroy the newspaper office and nearly kill Peabody. Ford portrays him with such affection that we can't help contrasting him with a slick, slightly officious editor who figures in the framing sequences of the film that take place 40 years after the main action. Here, working with comedy, Ford makes his point about the deteriorating quality of "civilized" life with subtlety and dramatic economy. The rest of *Liberty Valance* is equally masterful.

A final note: In the process of reviewing the films listed above, I found myself looking at some of them for what I realized must have been literally the tenth time—but, amazingly, I experienced not the slightest boredom or falling off of excitement. Ford's films hold up to repeat viewing better than those of any other filmmaker I know; one doesn't tire of looking at *The Searchers* any more than one would tire of looking at a painting by Renoir or Picasso. While we wait for films like *Stagecoach, They Were Expendable, The Sun Shines Bright, The Wings of Eagles* and the rest to come out in video, we can only be grateful that we have as many major Fords as we do available already. □

Selected Films of John Ford in Video

Release Date	Title	B&W/ Color	Running Time‡	Format
1935	The Informer	B&W	91	B/V
1936	Mary of Scotland	B&W	123	B/V
1948	Fort Apache	B&W	125	B/V
1949	She Wore a Yellow Ribbon	C	103	B/V
1950	Rio Grande	B&W	105	B/V
1950	Wagonmaster	B&W	85	B/V
1952	The Quiet Man	C	129	B/V
1953	Mogambo	C	115	B/V
1956	The Searchers	C	119	B/V
1962	The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance	B&W	122	B/V

Legend:
‡ = In minutes B&W = Black and White
C = Color V = ½-inch VHS B = ½-inch Beta



"Ford 'discovered' Monument Valley in Utah, and made it his own with a series of magnificent westerns that mark that genre's finest moments."

ATTRACTIONS LATEST

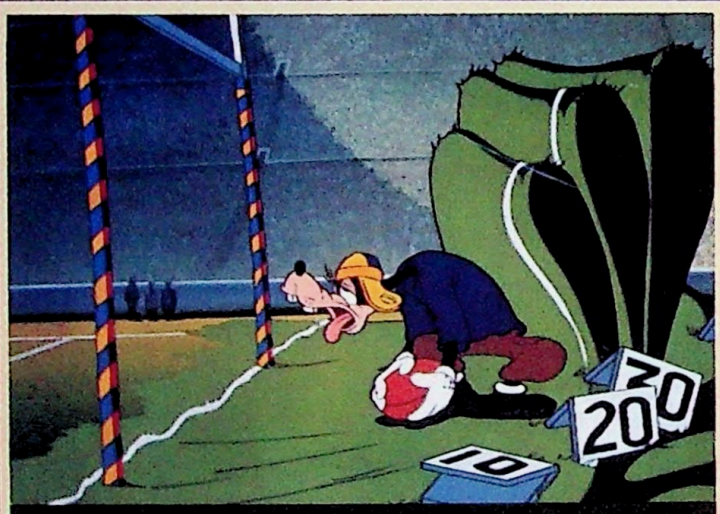
Noteworthy New Releases on Videotape and Disc

Here are selected new releases for home video viewing on VHS and Beta tapes, and videodisc where noted. Our *Critic's Choice* of classics and "instant classics" is compiled by our film reviewer, Michael Goodwin.

Action/Adventure
Adventures of Robin Hood (*MV*)
Airport (*MCA*)
Condorman (*WD*)
The Dogs of War (*MV*)
Earthquake (*MCA*)
Eyewitness (*MV*)
Images of Bruce Lee (*MHE*)
The Iron Mask (*BF*)
The Maltese Falcon (*MV*)
Midway (*MCA*)
The New Adventures of Charlie Chan (*VV*)
Nighthawks (*MCA*)
Speed Lovers (*HFP*)
Superfly (*WHV*)
Thief (*MV*)

Animation
Adventures of Ultraman (*FHE*)
Dot and the Kangaroo (*MV*)
Goofy over Sports (*WD*)

Comedy
Bananas (*MV*)
Car Wash (*MCA*)
Cat and Mouse (*CHE*)
Devil and Max Devlin (*WD*)
Fatty's Tin-Type Tangle/Our Congressman (*BF*)
The Fortune Cookie (*MV*)
Greased Lightning (*WHV*)
History of the World, Part I (*MV*)
Hold 'Em Jail (*BF*)
Irma La Douce (*MV*)
King of Hearts (*MV*)
Let's Do It Again (*WHV*)
Love at First Bite (*WHV*)
Pop Goes the Cork (*BF*)
The Russians Are Coming, The Russians Are Coming (*MV*)
A Shot in the Dark (*MV*)
Stir Crazy (*CHE*)
Take This Job and Shove It (*MV*)



Famous Disney character Goofy never was too physically coordinated. So you can imagine the rib-tickling consequences of the gangly dog's venture into the world of sports. In a new release from Walt Disney Home Video, *Goofy Over Sports*, the inimitable optimist takes on football, basketball, skiing, swimming, riding a horse, and the art of self-defense. Good luck, Goofy!

Tall Blond Man with One Black Shoe (*CHE*)
A Thousand Clowns (*MV*)
Uptown Saturday Night (*WHV*)
Wackiest Wagon Train in the West (*MHE*)

Documentary
Europe: The Allies Close in (*CBS*)
The John McEnroe Story: Rites of Passage (*KVC*)
Pumping Iron (*CHE*)
The Royal Wedding (*EVI*)
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (*BF*)
Walter Cronkite Remembers and Battle of the Bulge (*CBS*)

Drama
Blue Lagoon (*CHE*)
Breaker Morant (*CHE*)
The Competition (*CHE*)
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (*CBS*)
Hide in Plain Sight (*CBS*)
In MacArthur Park (*FHP*)
Kramer vs. Kramer (*CHE*)
March or Die (*MV*)
Mogambo (*CBS*)
Now, Voyager (*MV*)
The Two of Us (*CHE*)
Women in Love (*MV*)

Family
The Adventures of Buster the Bear (*FHE*)
The Adventures of Reddy the Fox (*FHE*)
The Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor (*FHE*)
Captains Courageous (*CBS*)
Chitty Chitty Bang Bang (*MV*)
Huckleberry Finn (*MV*)
Shaggy Dog (*WD*)
Treasure Island (*WD*)

Music/Dance/Entertainment
Fiddler on the Roof (*MV*)
Going My Way (*MCA*)
Holiday Inn (*MCA*)
Magical Mystery Tour (*MHE*)
Man of La Mancha (*MV*)
Purlie (*MGM*)
Rhythm (*VV*)
Swing (*VV*)
Tom Jones Live in Las Vegas (*FHE*)

Sci-Fi/Screamers
The Amityville Horror (*WHV*)
The Bees (*WHV*)
Blood Legacy (*VG*)
Craze (*VG*)
Crucible of Terror (*VG*)
Fall of the House of Usher (*WHV*)
Future World (*WHV*)
House of Seven Corpses (*VG*)
Island of Dr. Moreau (*WHV*)
The Meat Eater (*FHP*)
Meteor (*WHV*)
Rabid (*WHV*)
The Severed Arm (*VG*)
Silent Running (*MCA*)
Slime People (*VG*)
Sudden Terror (*MV*)
The Swarm (*WHV*)
Tales of Terror (*WHV*)

Sport
Baseball's Hall of Fame (*VA*)
Best Ever Quarterbacks (*NFL*)
In Search of Skiing (*MV*)
Super Memories of the Super Bowl (*NFL*)
Tennis Lessons Taught by Bjorn Borg (*SVF*)
Truk Lagoon (*TSS*)
Undersea Research (*TSS*)

Western
The Alamo (*MV*)
Legend of the Lone Ranger (*MV*)

Critic's Choice
Alphaville (*VV*)
Gentleman Jim (*MV*)
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (*MV*)
Magnificent Seven (*MV*)
Philadelphia Story (*CBS*)

BF—Blackhawk Films; **CBS**—CBS Video Enterprises; **CHE**—Columbia Home Entertainment; **EVI**—Electric Video, Inc.; **FHE**—Family Home Entertainment; **HFP**—Hollyco Film Productions; **KVC**—Karl Video Corp.; **MCA**—MCA Videocassette; **MGM**—MGM/CBS Home Video; **MHE**—Media Home Entertainment; **MV**—Magnetic Video; **NFL**—NFL Films Video; **SVP**—Star Video Productions; **TSS**—TV Sports Scene; **VA**—VidAmerica; **VG**—Video Gems; **VV**—Vintage Video; **WD**—Walt Disney Home Video; **WHV**—Warner Home Video.

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The Canon 1014XL-S and 814XL-S with their 10:1 and 8:1 respective zooming ranges share state-of-the-art electronics for unsurpassed special effects, flexibility and ease of use. Both share single-system sound as well as add-on double system capability with macro focusing at the touch of a button. They're the ultimate in sophisticated Super-8.

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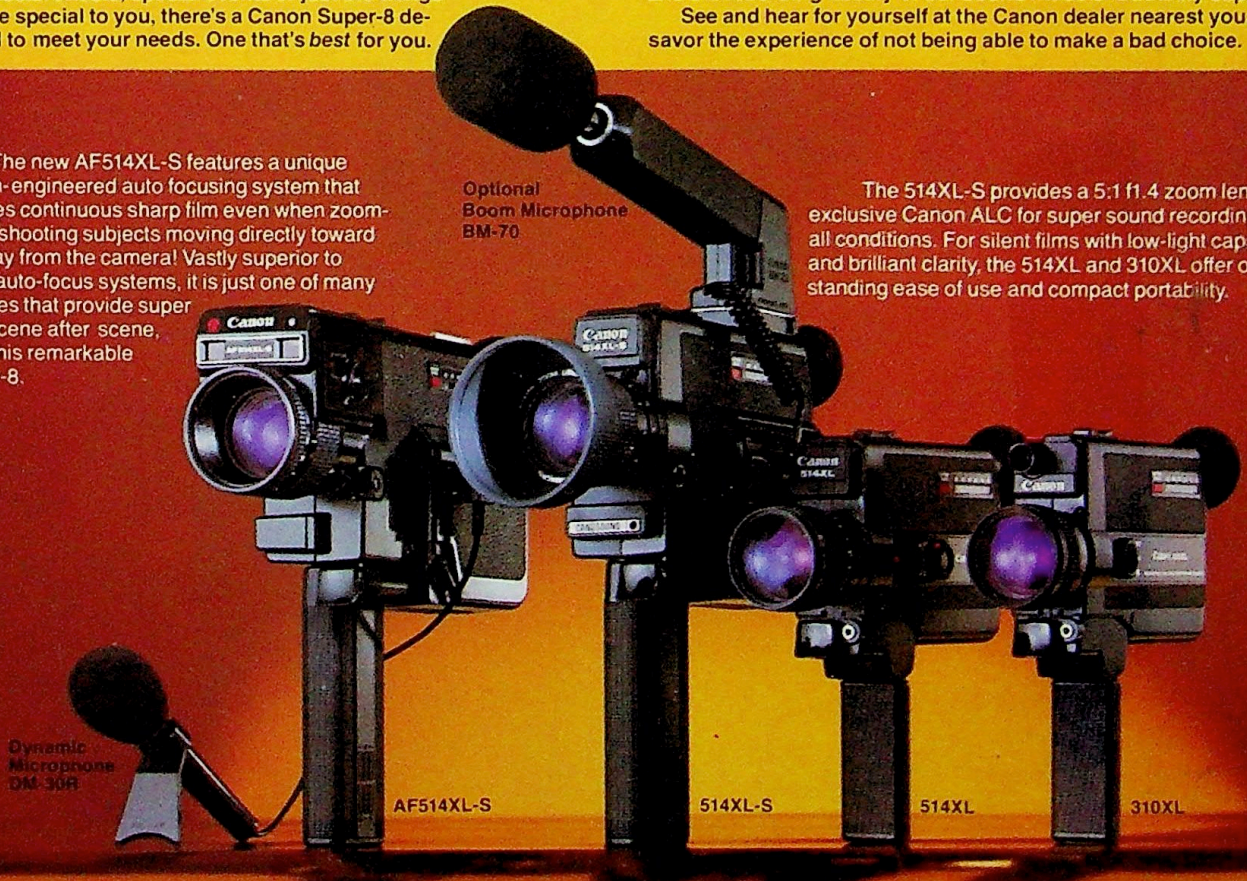

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